

"THE ROSE"

Revised Script 12-21-78
Based on Edited Film
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Script Supervisor

"THE ROSE"

Out of the BLACK a VOICE. Brief OPENING TITLES over a blank screen.

VOICE

I...I got a little song I want
to sing to you that I learned
when I was just so high. It was
really the first blues I ever
heard by this funny little man
named Perry Lewis. It went:

INT. CLOSED GARAGE

Blackness. The voice sings -- without accompaniment --
"Let Me Call You Sweetheart".

The door rolls up with a frightening CLATTER, the Florida sun bleaches the figures in the doorway into silhouette. Mother and Father lead the Reporters inside. Behind them appears a young Soldier. He watches. The Father pulls a string on the bare bulb hanging from the ceiling. The light goes on.

ANGLE ON THE COLLAGE

A thousand pictures covering the walls -- Aunts and Uncles, neighborhood children, bicycles, dogs -- grade school and high school photos. Teachers, students. Now pictures cut from magazines, movie stars, singers, musicians, interspersed with blond football players, tight-breasted cheerleaders, a couple at a prom. A massive mosaic of the reactions of a lonely child to the world around her.

Father and Mother are looking into the collage, past all the years and all the headlines. They don't know what to feel -- Rose is present, but unseen.

A photographer steps forward, prepares to take a picture of the collage.

The CAMERA PUSHES IN ON the collage, right into a picture of Rose as a child. Click.

EXT. AIRPORT - LA GUARDIA MARINE TERMINAL - DAY

An elongated black limo races across an empty expanse of concrete. It comes to a halt at the exact same moment that Rose's plane finishes its taxi and stops.

We hear Rose's voice in concert singing "Whose Side Are You On?"

The jet lowers its steps and the door raises up. The BLUES rip full burn.

EXT. JET - LA GUARDIA AIRPORT - DAY

An entourage of musicians and groupies file down from the plane. Then, there she is. In her late twenties, a satin version of outrageous splendor. She squints at the white light that eats her on the stairs. ROSE makes her way down as if she were walking on eggshells, holding on tight to her bag crammed with books and lemons and whatnots. She catches her heel on a step, but moves right on, steadfastly maintaining her dignity, a slightly unsteady but obedient child - making her way towards the Headmaster in the limousine -- and unwilling to let him know she is slightly stoned.

ANGLE ON ROSE

crossing to the limo, striving to maintain her delicate balance. A hidden bottle of Aquavit smashes on the runway.

EXT. JET - LA GUARDIA - BY THE LIMO - DAY

A figure slides out of the limo; he wears a beard, boots, a straw hat, Levi's. This is RUDGE, Rose's longtime personal manager. He treats her like a gifted but obstreperous child to whom he must give either a kick in the ass or a pat on the head. His genius is in knowing precisely when to give which. He helps Rose up, guides her to the back seat.

EXT. LA GUARDIA TERMINAL - DAY

The black limo, now on a concrete access road, disappears into the shimmering waves of heat, where finally it loses substance.

INT. CONCERT HALL - STAGE - TIGHT CLOSEUP -
ROSE - NIGHT

IN CONCERT - LIVE! -- finishing the BLUES, and in the light and the love, she looks like a new person; animated, receptive ...consuming every last ounce of energy in her being.

ROSE

(singing).

(The tail of "Whose Side Are
You On?", the last 12-bars
reworked to a shattering climax)

MAIN TITLES OUT as the song ends in animal SCREAMS from Rose. APPLAUSE has begun building over the end of the song, rising through the screams, overwhelming now as she gives and gives to the audience -- how can anybody give that much -- and now it is finally over in the thunder from the audience. Her eyes blind once from the sweat and tears as she is splintered into a million billion parts by the applause.

INT. CONCERT HALL - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

She has just changed 20,000 people; she's touched them and they worship her for it. And they keep letting her know, the APPLAUSE rolling up and billowing and then rising to SCREAMS, SCREAMS from 20,000 people.

The SCREAMING lingers.

INT. RUDGE'S OFFICE - NEW YORK - DAY

If there was a better view of Manhattan from his floor-to-ceiling windows, Rudge would have it. The furnishings are wall-to-wall Louis XV, silk and wood chairs, a 300-year-old writing desk, credenzas -- and gold records lining the walls. Rudge, the figure from the limo, is a bearded vision of record business hip in faded Levi's, four hundred dollar lizard-skin boots, a straw hat rolled rodeo-style, and a satin Knicks warm-up jacket. Rose stands next to the window.

ROSE

Pass me them peanuts.

RUDGE

(handing over
a dish)

They're cashews.

ROSE

God, you know everything.

(abruptly)

I need something new.

Rudge sits down in his chair.

ROSE (Cont'd)

I got no fucking life, Rudge.
I can't get laid. Nobody wants
me! That ain't all. You know,
I can't do things half-assed
anymore. You know, I've gotta
sound good! I've gotta sound
great! And I don't! I don't!
Look, it's not your fault --
I just think I got too much work...

RUDGE

We all work too hard, eh? Sometimes
in the morning, my pee is so tired
I have to wake it up with a shot of
vodka before it'll come out. Now,
that's tired.

ROSE

You listen to me, dear...I want some
time to myself before I drop dead.
I want a year off after the Florida
show.

RUDGE
(stands up)
You come into an inheritance
or something?

ROSE
No, man, I can't dredge up the
sincerity anymore.

RUDGE
Wrong!

ROSE
Don't tell me wrong!

RUDGE
29 people working for you!

ROSE
I'll be a cadaver pretty soon.

RUDGE
Okay, you want out? Call in the
dogs then and piss on the fire.

ROSE
I taught you that!

RUDGE
I know you taught me that! Three
million dollars' worth of dates
we're talking about cancelling
here. This is a fucking business!
Just like Chevrolet and Sara Lee!
This isn't "oooooh, you don't feel
so good today! Screw the promoters!
Call off the tour! Take a nap!"
It's up against the wall now. And
start shitting that art! So don't
anybody give me any "tired artiste"
bullshit, or I'll give them two dozen
badass lawyers to drive 'em crazy with.

Rose freezes. A crackling silence. Then, in contrast,
whispers now, very close to his face.

ROSE
Well, I guess you told me.

RUDGE
(equally quiet)
Yeah, I guess I did.

Rose turns away and sits down very low near the window.
Rudge crosses to her and sits on the table nearby.

RUDGE

Rose...you're one of the very
best singer ladies in the history
of the world. Pure and simple.
Don't fuck it up...

(sits down close
to her)

..Sweetcheeks...sweetcheeks...

(they embrace)

Hey, you want to eat some Chinese?

ROSE

All 900 million of 'em.

A pause, then in a moment of mutual understanding and
perhaps forgiveness, each raises a thumb and repeats the
industry motto:

ROSE AND RUDGE

(together)

Rack jobbers rule!

RUDGE

You ready?

ROSE

Yassuh, Mista Rudge. I's ready.

Rudge stands up immediately and walks away.

RUDGE

(o.s.)

Send them in.

Rose pulls herself together, stands up.

INT. RUDGE'S OFFICE - DAY

The office doors are opened by Dennis Haller, Rose's road
manager. Dennis has been with her since the beginning.
In rush a swarm of reporters, media people, TV camera
crews, still photographers.

RUDGE

Dennis! Move the chair back!

Rose moves to the front of Rudge's desk -- an instant
podium -- swings herself up and sits. Rudge takes his place
at her side. It's bedlam with greetings and questions.
Rudge raises his arms, trying to start the interview.

RUDGE
(shouting over
the din)
Quiet! Quiet!

REPORTER (Richard)
How about some flesh?

ROSE
(dropping one
shoulder of her
blouse)
Eat your little heart out,
Richard.

The questions come in clusters, an improvised affair.
Rose picks out the ones she chooses to answer.

REPORTER (Ken)
What have you been up to,
Rose?

ROSE
Oh, same as everybody -- hangin'
out, havin' a good time, stayin'
stoned...gettin' laid!

A big response to this.

RUDGE
Hey, ask her what the advance is
for the Florida show.

REPORTER (Jack)
(leaning forward)
Is the hometown concert really
sold out?

RUDGE
Well, we've got four or five
seats left in the parking lot
going for a bill apiece -- after
that, we're clean!

ROSE
Rudge here wants to put a roof
over the place so we can hang 'em
from the chandeliers!

RUDGE
(going right
on)
We're taping it as the big finish
for our television special...

REPORTER (David)

What network?

RUDGE

I got two networks fighting for it already. And I've sold it to fifteen countries foreign. I see a gross of at least four million.

Pencils scribble furiously.

ROSE

And I do the singin'! Me!

Smiles.

REPORTER (Catherine)

Mary Rose, how do you feel about doing a concert back home?

ROSE

...I...I think it'll be nice, you know? They're my own people. I know them. They know me. They understand me, and of course I understand them.

REPORTER (Sondra)

You look tired, Rose.

ROSE

Well, honey, if you had to work for a living, your ass would be dragging, too.

(then, to everyone)

So. After my hometown show, I'm thinking about taking a year off.

Rudge's eyes flash to her. The reporters explode with questions about this announcement, but Rose ignores them. She is watching Rudge.

RUDGE

Sure! She's going to take a year off! The Virgin Mary's stepping off the bench to fill in for us.

Rudge and Rose still locked, staring hard at each other.

INT. BACKSTAGE LOCKER ROOMS - NEW YORK THEATRE -
NIGHT

SOUNDS of the crowd outside.

The guys in the band are lounging around, some eating off a caterers' table, someone restringing a guitar, another practicing runs on the bass, everyone fiddling around nervously. Several select GROUPIES, almost falling out of their clothes, are sitting quietly on the torn leather couch and nobody is paying any attention to them even though you can see their nipples. Assorted hangers-on line the room.

Dennis enters, takes in the situation and bangs on his metal briefcase for quiet.

DENNIS

Hold it! Hold it! Hold it!
We got twenty minutes! You
want to tell me who all these
people are? Listen, I want
everybody that doesn't belong
in this dressing room to get the
hell out of here -- and right
now!

Dennis starts ushering people out. Norton goes up to Dennis as a line of girls starts out.

NORTON

Come on, man. This is my sister
...my cousin...my nephew...my
stepmother...

DENNIS

Let's go...Out! Out! ...You too.

WHITEY

They're not doing anything.

DENNIS

Let's go! Out!
(crosses to two
groupies on other
side of room)
Come on, girls. Out! We can
party after the show, not now.
The band never listens to me
for two seconds.

The girls go, passing Rose, who arrives just now.

ROSE

(looks at the
taller of the two
girls)

Nice big one! Save some for me
sometime!

Rose crosses to a buffet table.

ROSE
Smells like jockstraps in here,
y'all.

(calls out)
Danny! Lemme see the list.

Danny turns over his guitar and she quickly studies the little piece of paper he has scotch-taped to the back.

Dennis, Robbie and Norton gather around.

ROSE
Cut "Fire Down Below."

ROBBIE
Come on, Rose, you always liked that one.

ROSE
Well, let's cut "Keep on Rockin'" then.

NORTON
Rose, the set's all right.

ROSE
(wheels around
to him)
No, it damn well is not!

DENNIS
Rose...all those tunes you sing wonderfully.

ROSE
(screams)
If I want to cut a song, that's it!

Silence, then:

NORTON
Let's cut it.

ROSE
Oh, shit. I'm sorry.

DENNIS
Well, you're in good voice!
The mama's in good voice!

ROSE
(gives Danny a
stopwatch)
Here. That's for you, baby.

DANNY

Great! What's this for?

ROSE

I only have thirty-five good minutes in me tonight. When I start to sing, push the button. Keep track of my time. Don't let me go past thirty-five minutes.

(leaves and calls
back)

Or you'll hear from me, motherfucker.

DANNY

That's a new one.

INT. ROSE'S BACKSTAGE ROOM - NIGHT

All alone, staring into a mirrored triptych, she is doing some strange deep breathing exercise. And swigging from a bottle of Aquavit. Over and over, deeper and deeper, Rose's face is getting red, her concentration is complete. Now, slowly, verrrrrry slowly, her ass comes off the chair and she straightens her legs out, still locked into that stare, still breathing even more deeply.

The crowd out front chants wildly.

Now she swings around, her eyes wild, her face flushed, pulsing with rage and joy. In this frozen second, we see her filling herself with the emotional rocket fuel that will launch her performance. Although she is stock-still, she looks totally mad!

The chants from the crowd build and build.

Now Dennis leads her toward the stage.

DENNIS

This is your night, baby. You own it! You own it! Look out, New York!

INT. CORRIDOR BACKSTAGE - NEW YORK THEATRE -
ANGLE RUNNING WITH THEM - NIGHT

Through the backstage traffic, the huge SOUND of an enormous crowd RUMBLING, the MUSIC pounding. They both break into a sprint.

DENNIS

(stopping her)

Now listen, Rose. Rose, I don't want you to say 'motherfucker' tonight, alright? Now listen, there are a lot of important critics out there that we need, you hear me? And cameras all over the place. Now please don't say 'motherfucker', alright? Okay, go get 'em, baby.

INT. STAGE - NEW YORK THEATRE - NIGHT

The band is working out. In the middle of the stage is one mike, way out front, dramatically alone. Suddenly, a spotlight hits the mike. SOUND: the applause gets apocalyptic and the band looks offstage.

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE

(O.S.)

Ladies and gentlemen, THE ROSE.

The ROAR and APPLAUSE peak. And now they see her. She stares out at them and begins to strut across the stage. Jagger? Honey, this is where he got his shit! This is The Rose, and as she grabs the mike, stand and all, she is a pure thing of beauty. Feathers and patchwork flying, her flesh streaked with sweat, she is a stunning vision of Heaven blown hot from Hell.

The band hits a chord -- SILENCE.

ROSE

Hi ya, Motherfuckers!!!!!!!!!!

The crowd ROARS, Dennis rolls his eyes upwards, the band BLASTS into the opening chords. The crowd, immediately recognizing the number, lets go a single mind-bending SCREAM; nothing can be heard but a WALL OF NOISE.

Danny starts the stopwatch Rose gave him earlier.

A big HUNK of MUSIC, "Midnight in Memphis," opens like an express train, a nine-chorus thing that rolls and bends and twists; Rose pulling the audience along, handling them as she pleases.

At the end of the number the audience goes wild and someone hands up a bottle of Aquavit. Rose takes a swig, puts it down on the drumstand and picks up the mike again.

ROSE

Howdy, New York City. How you doing? Long time no see, huh?
(circling the stage)

ROSE (Cont.)

You want to know how I keep this
tired, battered old body in shape,
folks? I'll tell you how. The
same way we're gonna get the whole
goddam world in shape: Drugs!
Sex! And Rock and Roll!

The audience picks up and continues the chant: Drugs!
Sex! Rock and Roll!

INT. TREASURER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Rudge ambles out of the office into the projection booth
which overlooks the stage and looks down through binoculars.

There's Rose, way below, crossing upstage to the drumstand
where she takes a swig of Aquavit.

Rudge picks up a phone and dials an extension.

In the stage right wings, the light flashes on a wall
phone next to Dennis. He picks it up.

RUDGE

Dennis! Do you see what's going
on out there?

DENNIS

Well, what do you want me to do?
I mean, they keep handing her
bottles up on the stage.

RUDGE

Shit!

He hangs up.

INT. STAGE

Out on stage Rose warms up the audience for the next number.

ROSE

Sometimes people say to me, they
say: Rose, when was the first time
you ever heard the blues? And I
tell them, I tell them, the day I
was born.

(applause)

And you know why? Because I was
born a woman.

(applause)

Oh, we got some noisy females in
the house tonight. Oh, being a
woman is so interesting, don't
you find it?

(Continued_

ROSE (Cont.)

What are we ladies, what are we?
We're waitresses at the banquet
of life.

(applause)

Get into that kitchen and rattle
them pots and pans. And you'd
better look pretty goddam good
doing it, too, or else you're
gonna lose a good thing.

(applause)

And why do we do that? Why do
we do that? I'll tell you why
we do that. We do that to find
love. Oh, I love to be in love.
Don't you love to be in love?
Ain't it just great to be in love?
Ain't it wonderful? Ain't it just
grand laying there late at night
in your bed waiting for your man
to show up, and when he finally
does, round about four o'clock in
the morning with whiskey on his
breath and the smell of another
woman on his person; oh honey, I
can smell another woman at 500
paces. That's an easy one to catch.
Oops, mama's getting nasty.

She struts back and forth, near the farrago of clutching
hands, deep into her rap, daring them to even touch her.
She spins and kicks her mike cord like a woman possessed.

ROSE (Cont.)

So what do you do when he comes
home with the smell of another
woman on him? Do you say 'Oh
honey, let me open up my lovin'
arms and my lovin' legs? Dive
right in, baby, the water is
fine.' Is that what you say, girls?
Or do you say 'Fuck this Shit?!!!!'

(wild applause)

I had enough of you, you asshole.
Pack your bags. I'm puttin' on my
little waitress cap and my fancy
high-heeled shoes and I'm gonna
go find me a real man, a good man,
a true man, a man to love me for
sure.' You know, I tell you
something, I tell you something,
I thought at one time, I actually
thought I'd found myself one, I did.

The APPLAUSE has been building through the talk and now standing there, pouring sweat, she has to wait for it to subside.

Invoking some mystical source of renewed energy, she digs down, past the remnants of whatever is left in her, past even the core of herself, baring everyone's pain. And sings a woman's wail, "When A Man Loves A Woman," about the time her first real lover left her and broke her heart. There is sorrow, forgiveness, and bitter anguish in the song. Everyone in that auditorium is welded to the spot.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NEW YORK THEATRE - ANGLE ON DENNIS - NIGHT

Standing backstage between two giant stacks of speakers, looking at Rose - he is awed. His eyes never leave her. We feel her pain through the pain in his face, as if he were watching the life spilling out of her at the moment.

INT. STAGE WITH ROSE

She sings high and low, rough and smooth...it doesn't seem to matter. She has it all in her voice and as Danny weaves a guitar line around her words, he can't look at her. She finishes the song.

EXT. HELICOPTER PAD - NIGHT

Rose, Rudge and a DISPATCHER climb up a stairway to the pad. A helicopter sits on the pad, rotors idling, a pilot waiting inside at the controls. Rose is whipped. Sweat streaks down her face.

ROSE

You could've at least let me change.

RUDGE

We only got thirty minutes to get to Billy Ray before he splits.

DISPATCHER

Relax, Champ. We got it covered.

RUDGE

Yeah, everybody's got it covered.

Rose stumbles on a step.

RUDGE

What's the matter? What's the matter?

ROSE

Oh, baby, I'm so hungry. Feed me, baby. Hold me. Make me happy.

Rudge reaches into his pocket and hands her a disposable syringe as the dispatcher goes on ahead.

ROSE

What's in it?

RUDGE

Vitamins. C's and B-12.

ROSE

(voice cracking,
laughs)

Cookies and milk.

Bang. She jams it in her ass, right through her sweat-stained satin pants.

ROSE

Kid stuff.

RUDGE

Yeah. Keep it that way.

ROSE

Look at my arms. I'm clean so long the scars have healed.

RUDGE

I'm not checking your arms anymore. That's all behind us.

They move out toward the waiting helicopter.

ROSE

I look like shit.

RUDGE

You look like a star.

ROSE

(miserably)

My hair's all stringy-- my clothes are all fucked up -- Why can't we do this some other time?

Rudge helps Rose into the helicopter and climbs in after her.

RUDGE

Billy Ray's been begging me
to meet you. I promised him.

ROSE

Then why don't he come to see
me?!

The door closes and the helicopter takes off across the
city.

EXT. HELICOPTER - PARKING LOT OF MAKESHIFT
CONCERT AREA - NEW JERSEY - NIGHT

The twin rotors flump flump flump, kicking up rhythmic
waves on the grass as Rudge and Rose clamber down the
steps out of the bubble. Rudge hustles her along through
the remains of a concert site after a big C&W show;
trash and tipped garbage cans, trailers, a few parking
attendants coiling guide ropes, a scattering of New Jersey
State Troopers and die-hards waiting for Billy Ray, dust
clouding up the night, the last security guys in Day-Glo
golf caps heading home.

INT. BILLY RAY'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Billy and a few of his band strum to a finish of a number.

DEE

Billy Ray, this here's Rudge,
Rudge Campbell, that I been
tellin' ya about. And Rose.

But she has her eyes riveted to a 17-year-old blonde
MANDOLIN PLAYER, just putting away his instrument. She
sashays on over.

ROSE

Well, hell-ow, Sturdly.

KID

Ahhh, hi...
(pause)
...ma'am.

There is laughter. Rose turns to Rudge and Billy Ray.

ROSE

Damn, I wish this little cherry
was in my band! Can you diddle
that thing, Cotton!

KID

I surely can, Rose! Wanna hear?

She circles the boy.

ROSE

Oh, my, I don't believe you!
What a fine young piece!

RUDGE

Billy Ray, this is Rose.

ROSE

Hi. Gosh, I loved you for so
many years, so many years.

BILLY RAY

You did, huh?

ROSE

Yeah, I have.

DEE

She did one of your tunes in
her latest album --

BILLY RAY

I know. I heard all about it.
It's a pleasure to meet such a
dainty lady.

ROSE

How'd we miss gettin' together
f'all these years?

BILLY RAY

Careful plannin'.

A teeny pause and then he laughs. And when Billy Ray
laughs, so do all his good ole boys. Now she knows
something's wrong, but she plows ahead gamely.

ROSE

I'm looking forward to hearing
the rest of your catalogue. I
sang 'Huntsville Prison' tonight
and the place went apeshit!

(to Rudge)

Didn't they?

RUDGE

Yeah, they did...they did.

BILLY RAY

Yeah, I heard a lot of good things
about your record of 'Huntsville'.

ROSE

y'did?

BILLY RAY

Yuh, ole Dee here said it was about the best he ever heard, as a matter of fact. Said it even cut Dolly's.

ROSE

(to Dee)

Nawww...you never said that!

BILLY RAY

But I'm gonna be real straight with ya. It didn't show me much.

Dead silence.

BILLY RAY (Cont.)

Not much at all.

Rose looks at Rudge, then back at Billy Ray. This isn't a joke.

BILLY RAY

You think I'm kidding, don't ya?

ROSE

(softly)

I kinda hope so.

BILLY RAY

This world's too full of bull already, lady. Now understand me. I surely don't begrudge anybody their due, but I'd just appreciate if you didn't record anymore of my tunes..

Rudge can't take his eyes off the disaster. Rose's eyes fill.

BILLY RAY

It'd be different if you knew what they was about...That's the way I feel about it.

Rose starts out of the room.

BILLY RAY

...and...I want to tell you something else.

Rose turns back to him, trembling.

BILLY RAY

I don't appreciate your coming
in here talking all that trash.
Especially to my son.

The Young Man is scarlet as Rose turns and walks from
the room. After a second, Rudge follows, calling after
her.

DEE

Shit, Billy Ray.

EXT. CONCERT AREA - NIGHT

The dust clouding into darkness as the floods are cut
and the parking arcs start going off one by one. There
are still clusters of rednecks with Camels flipped up in
their T-shirt sleeves and their women with lacquered bee-
hives, but the place is mostly an echoey graveyard now,
a circus being taken down. Rose storms off in some
direction, the helicopter, she thinks. Rudge yells after
her.

RUDGE

Rose, listen to me.
(stopping her)
Listen, that was awful.

ROSE

How could you let him talk
to me like that?

RUDGE

What was I supposed to do?

ROSE

Oh, Rudge, if I knew, what the
fuck would I need you for?

She continues walking, Rudge alongside.

ROSE (Cont.)

You just stood there --

RUDGE

Listen, he's an asshole.
(stops her
again)
What can I tell you?

ROSE

That ain't it. That doesn't
make me feel any better.

RUDGE

Oh, look, Angel, you don't have
to let that ole stuff get to you.
What do you care about a redneck
singer? You're the star!

ROSE

Then why didn't you tell him that?

Silence.

ROSE

(suddenly)

You're trying to sign him, ain't
ya?

RUDGE

What?

ROSE

You're trying to sign him.

RUDGE

I don't believe this! I don't
believe this!

(looking skyward)

She's only kidding, God!
She's only kidding.

ROSE

'Dyin' to meet me...' My ass!
You dragged me up here for a
bunch of clout and it goddam
well backfired on you, didn't
it?

RUDGE

Wrong!

Suddenly right next to Rose, some REDNECK throwback rolls
down his window in his GMC pickup, guns it. His Adam's
apple is out to here.

REDNECK

(to Rose)

Hey, baby--

ROSE

Get lost!

And without missing a beat, she's back at Rudge.

ROSE

Lowlifes!

RUDGE

Calm down, Rose.

ROSE

Don't tell me to calm down!

REDNECK

I'd calm down if you'd sit on my face.

ROSE

Oh yeah? Is that right?

Rose reaches into her sack, spins around and smashes him in the face with a liquor bottle wrapped in a paper bag. The Redneck's head hits his horn, coldcocked.

RUDGE

(shouting over the horn)

Jesus! You are a maniac!

(steps closer)

You go through life like it was some jack-off dream.

ROSE

Fuck you! Fuck him! And fuck 'em all.

She goes.

Rudge leaps at the redneck, pulls his head up and calls for help. A couple of workers run over to the truck, joined by the Trooper and others, all surrounding Rudge.

TROOPER

What happened?

RUDGE

He passed out. He passed out.

TROOPER

Morris, get a first aid kit.

Rudge stares hard in the direction in which Rose disappeared.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Rose runs among parked trucks and vans, then lunges at a limo, pulls the back door open, slams it behind her and falls onto the back seat.

Reading a book at the wheel is Houston Dyer -- a solid, together man in his late twenties. Man, not boy, but something of the rural about him. When the door slams, he quickly turns toward the back seat.

DYER .

Hey, lady, this car is taken.

ROSE

I wanna get out of here.

DYER

So does the cowboy in the trailer back there. Billy Ray owns the car for the night.

ROSE

Yeah? Well, I got a great idea.

(pulls money from
her bag and throws
it at him)

Let him walk! Let him walk!
Let him walk!

DYER

Hey! I don't need this. Hey!

Rose sinks back in the corner, crying. She covers her face.

DYER

Hey, don't...Hey, don't worry,
lady, you just bought yourself
a car and driver.

He puts on his chauffeur's cap and starts the motor.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Rudge dodges between the parked vehicles, running fast.

RUDGE

Rose! Rose! Come back! Rose!

But he's too late. Just as he reaches the limo, it pulls away. Rudge stands there, helpless, shaking his head. The limo skids away through the stadium, loose papers rising in its wake, and disappears around a corner. Rudge moves off.

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

On the highway. Rose, slumped in the back, reaches in her bag for a bottle. She unscrews the top and is about to drink when she catches Dyer watching her in the rear view mirror. The bottle hangs there, perched in her hand, as she studies him.

ROSE
What are you lookin' at?

No answer. Then:

ROSE (Cont.)
Do you know who I am?

DYER
(matter-of-factly)
Yeah. You're the Rosé.

A silence as she waits for more. But nothing more comes.

ROSE
Is that all?

DYER
'Scuse me?

ROSE
That's all you're gonna say?

DYER
Well, I dunno. I always liked
your music. A lot.

ROSE
It's all right, honey, you don't
have to fall down and wet your
pants.

Dyer chuckles. Rose takes a too-long taste from the bottle.
When she brings it back down, he is watching her.

DYER
My name's Houston.

ROSE
You from Texas?

DYER
Yeah. Waxahachie.

ROSE
Wax-a-what?

DYER
Waxahachie. I think it's got
the highest rate per capita of
insanity, suicide, and incest
of just about any place in the
country...

Rose laughs.

DYER
...but it's fun city on a
Saturday night.

ROSE
Is that right?

DYER
Where you headed, lady?

ROSE
Oh, I dunno. The Big City.

DYER
New York. Bright lights, big
city.

ROSE
Goddam, I picked myself a live
one tonight. Bright lights,
big city. You're smokin' tonight,
son!

(hands him the
bottle)
Here. Have one on your ole mama.

DYER
Thanks.

Dyer takes the bottle and drinks.

EXT/INT. MARKET DINER - NIGHT

A neon oasis in a desert of steel. Semis two and three deep, a few diesels idling. Through the window of the diner to the parking lot outside, we see the limo arrive and park. Dyer and Rose get out. Rose wrenches her ankle on her broken heel and in an instant tantrum whips the shoes off and flings them into the night.

They come into the diner and instantly all conversation stops. The place is peopled with merchant men and truckers, straight up-and-down hardworking types -- all looking tired and rough. They all stare at Rose.

Rose and Dyer sit down at the counter and Rose picks up a menu.

DYER
(looking around)
Pies sure looking good, don't
they?

The waitress, Arlene, is nearby, but before she can say anything, the short order cook, Jack, comes up to Rose and grabs the menu from her hands.

COOK
We don't serve hippies.

ROSE
Well, that's okay, cause we
don't eat 'em neither.

COOK
(calls the
waitress)
Arlene --

He walks away, disgusted.

ARLENE
Okay, Jack, I'll take care
of it.

She comes over to Rose and Dyer.

ROSE
I would like ham and swiss
on rye. Hold the mayo. And
a beer, please.

DYER
I'd like a BLT with the mayo.
And some pickles.

ARLENE
(trying to avoid
what's coming)
Why don't you do yourself a
big favor and take something to
go?

ROSE
Suits the shit outta me.

DYER
Sure, give us the ham and cheese
and whatever else you have ready.

ARLENE
Egg salad?

A mammoth trucker is seated at the other end of the counter,
glaring at Rose.

ROSE
What the hell are you looking
at?
(then)
Damn! Ain't you Paul Newman?

TRUCKER #1
Get lost, bimbo.

ARLENE
(spotting trouble)
Why don't you just take some
Danishes? I can put 'em in a
bag and you can go.

But Rose bangs the counter with her hand and is on her
way up, her eyes never leaving the guy.

DYER
(to Arlene as he
follows Rose)
Whatever you've got that's
quick...

Rose walks the distance toward the trucker, Dyer beside
her. Before she can say anything, another guy stands up
and stops Dyer.

TRUCKER #2
Hey, pal. I'd haul ass if I
was you. Know what I mean?

DYER
Yeah, I know what you mean.
Soon as we get our stuff.

ARLENE
It's coming. It's coming.

But Rose can't be headed off.

ROSE
(to Dyer, shouting
for everybody's benefit)
I don't know about you, but I'm
about ready to kick me some ass
around here.

The friend of "Paul Newman" spins his stool around and
points at Dyer.

TRUCKER #3
Take the sloppy whore outta
here!

Rose leans down close to him.

ROSE
If your dick is as small as
your brain, you're in a lot of
trouble. You know what I mean?

The guy stands up and the fight is on. Dyer punches him in the stomach, then a fast rabbit chop to the neck, sending him crashing down to the counter, his face landing in his bowl of soup.

The 2nd Trucker goes for Dyer and Dyer punches him out with another two swift blows.

ARLENE

No, please! Just go! Please
take your stuff and go! Just
get out of here!

Paul Newman stands and challenges Dyer, then backs down.

ARLENE

(handing paper
bag to Rose)
Here. Just take this and go.
Just get outta here.

DYER

(throws a bill
down)
Show's over, folks. The man's
just gonna continue eating his
soup.

Rose and Dyer leave. Arlene bends over the trucker and lifts his head up.

ARLENE

Jack! Get some ice!

INT. LIMO - CITY - NIGHT

Dyer driving along. Rose at his side, feeding a Danish to him. Having a party.

ROSE

Doggone, you slapped that sucker
silly! I thought that was great.
Just like being on TV!

DYER

Let the good times roll!

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE - MANHATTAN SIDE - NIGHT

The limousine drives off the bridge and disappears into the undercaverns near the river.

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

Music on the radio segues to a droning voice.

NEWS ANNOUNCER

--- in Congress, the debate over the use of napalm and the strategy of defoliation continues. Charges were hurled that women and children are being burned to death...

ROSE

What animals! I don't know how human beings can behave that way, you know?

No answer. Dyer turns off the radio and sighs.

ROSE

Houston? You look like you need a drink. And you know what? Your ole mama's gonna buy you one, too. That's right. We're gonna put our dancing shoes on and we're gonna buy ourselves a drink.

She pulls a pair of gold sandals from her bag.

DYER

Good deal, Lu-cile.

EXT. "77 CLUB" - NIGHT

A derelict street of crumbling tenements, fire escapes and cars half-stripped down. Dyer's limo drives up and parks. Rose jumps out and runs into the arms of the doorman. He swings her around, then sets her down.

ROSE

George! Give me some skin, man. How you doin'?

GEORGE

Fine, baby.

Dyer joins them.

ROSE

My old pal, this is my new pal.

They go into the club.

INT. "77 CLUB" - NIGHT

Full of cigarette smoke and hustle. A driving band, the Hummingbirds, back a female impersonator, Michael. In the hot spot of the light, he does an unbelievably perfect rendition of Baby Jane. Butch waiters in tux serve drinks to the customers -- straight tourists, wealthy people, among others. A happy, electric atmosphere.

BABY JANE

(singing)

I've written a letter to daddy
His address is heaven above
I've written 'dear daddy we miss you'
And wish you were with us to love (2-3 turn)
Instead of a stamp I put kisses
The postman says that's best to do
I've written a letter to daddy, saying
I love you.

During the first part of the above song, Rose and Dyer enter. Rose tugs at the sleeve of a gown worn by a tall drag queen who is the Maitresse D' and who is standing in the doorway. "She's" called Butch.

BUTCH

Hiya, Rosie. Haven't seen you
in so long.

ROSE

Long time, no see.
(looking at his
wig)
Holy shit, your hair has a
hardon!

Butch leads them toward a table.

BUTCH

Who's the Young Republican you
have with you tonight?

ROSE

Aw, come on, don't dump on him.
He saved my life twice tonight!

Rose and Dyer sit down. Butch squats down close to Rose.

BUTCH

(to Dyer)

Excuse me, sir.

(whispers to
Rose)

I've got a nickel bag. Very
pure. No lactose. No quinine.
You can run this horse all the
way to Aquaduct and win.

ROSE

Uh-uh. Mama don't ride the
horse no more, honey, didn't
you hear? I'm clean.

(to Houston)

What you drinking, Houston?

DYER

Tequila.

ROSE

(to Butch)

A bottle of tequila and a couple
of glasses. And no cracks.

BUTCH

How daring!

Butch leaves. Onstage "Baby Jane" continues.

BABY JANE

I used to be a big star too,
Miss Hudson. My sister, Henry...

DYER

Weirdsville!

ROSE

Come on, honey, relax! Relax!

BABY JANE

Did you hear about the Polish
lesbian? She liked men!

(sings the
finale)

"I love you!"

Applause. Rose and Dyer joining in. Onstage, Michael
pulls off his hat and wig.

DYER

Reminds me of a dream I had
once in the Phillipines.

Rose looks at him with curiosity.

Michael pulls off his dress, revealing a tuxedo, grabs a
towel and addresses the audience.

MICHAEL

Thank you, thank you.

Butch, at the edge of the stage, hands him a note.

MICHAEL (Cont.)

Thank you, bitch...er, Butch.
I'm sorry, excuse me. Right on!
Wonderful. Wonderful audience.

(after reading
the note)

We have somebody in the audience
too that tried to sneak in a
little while ago, which is impossible
for her. She used to live upstairs
and every night we'd say ARE YOU
SLEEPING?!!! She never was, never
was.

ROSE

(calls to Michael)

Where's the ten bucks you owe me,
motherfucker?

MICHAEL

How rude! She did a concert
earlier tonight where she personally
slayed thousands of people, sang her
guts out. In fact, I want to send
her a drunk. Waiter, will you send
her a drunk on me? Ladies and
gentlemen, will you welcome, please
-- I'm gonna get in trouble for pointing
her out, I know -- the incredible ROSE!

A spotlight hits her table as the audience applauds,
many of them getting to their feet.

Rose stands and takes a bow, then sits down again with
Dyer.

MICHAEL

Have we got a surprise for you!
All right, gentlemen, hit it.

The band breaks into the introduction of a song.

From the wings another female impersonator flounces
onstage. She is dressed as a perfect copy of Rose,
including a wild-haired blonde wig. She stomps across
the stage, yelling into her mike.

"ROSE"

Hiya, motherfuckers!

ROSE

(to Dyer)

That drag queen's doing me!

Rose folds neatly in half, hysterical. Even Dyer lets
go, caught in the moment, and laughs.

Then "Rose" launches into one of Rose's most famous hits, "Fire Down Below." The impersonation and the voice as well are stunning.

"ROSE"

(singing)

Here comes old Rose lookin mighty fine

Here comes hot Ruby -- she's steppin'
right on time.

Here comes the stripper, she's bringin'
on the night.

There go the boys' faces hidden from
the light.

(starts toward

Rose's table)

All through the shadows, they come and
they go.

(arrives at the

table)

They got one thing in common

They got fire down below.

(pulls Rose to

her feet)

Here come the rich man in his big limousine

(and up onto the

stage)

Here come the man, all you gotta have is green

Here come the banker, the lawyer and the cop

(Michael brings Rose a

mike and the two Roses

sing together)

One thing for certain it ain't never gonna stop.

When it gets too heavy, they come and they go.

They got one thing in common

It's a fire down below.

(Another impersonator

dressed as Diana Ross

is suddenly there and

joins in)

It happens down in Vegas

It happens in Orleans

On the blue blood streets of Boston

Out in Berkeley, out in Queens

It went on yesterday

It's goin on tonight

Somewhere there's somebody treatin somebody right.

Suddenly another impersonator is there: Barbra Streisand!
Rose is slayed and does a mock fall to the floor.

Lookin' out for Rose, lookin' mighty fine
Walk the streets with Nancy, find her every time.
Street lights flicker, bringin' on the night
Slippin' in the darkness, slippin' out of sight.

All through the shadows, they come and they go.
They got one thing in common
They got a fire down below.

"Rose" turns, revealing a fourth impersonator: Mae West. During a 16 bar instrumental, Mae does a well-known one-liner: "Are you in town for good, or for fun?"

It happens down in Vegas
 It happens in Orleans
 On the blue blood streets of Boston
 Down in Berkeley, out in Queens
 It went on yesterday
 It's goin' on tonight
 Somewhere there's somebody treatin' somebody
 right.

Lookin' out for Rose, lookin' mighty fine
 Walk the streets with Nancy, find her every
 time
 When the streetlights flicker bringin' on
 the night
 Slippin' into darkness, slippin' out of sight.

All through the shadows, they come and they go.
 They got one thing in common
 They got the fire down below.
 They got one thing in common
 They got the fire down below.

Now follow 32 bars of the ride out, everyone singing
 "Fire! Fire! Fire! Fire!", etc.

Rose is lifted by Barbra and Mae, circling this way and
 that.

The audience is wilder than ever, clapping, dancing.

DYER

Far out! Far fucking out!

Now Rose looks over at Dyer and dances over to the table
 where she pulls him to his feet.

ROSE

Come on! Come on!

She drags him up onto the stage and they start to dance.
 Dyer pulls his boots off and really gets into it.

The audience, cheering now and singing along: Fire!
 Fire! Fire! Fire!

ROSE

Are you trying to get into
 my bloomers, sonny?

DYER
Workin' on it.

ROSE
(leaping on
him)
You brown-eyed motherfucker,
where you been all my life?

They kiss as the song ends. Applause and excitement
beyond belief.

EXT. PLAZA HOTEL - DAWN

The flags over the entranceway are billowing in the early
morning light. A horse and buggy is parked at the curb,
the driver asleep.

The limo swerves around the corner and brakes to a halt.
Dyer gets out -- from the passenger side. Rose has been
doing the driving. She comes around the front of the
car and Dyer helps her onto the sidewalk.

ROSE
Ever polite. Ever polite.

DYER
Just the way my mama taught me.

ROSE
Which mama was that, baby?

Rose stares up at the entranceway.

ROSE
Look at this place! Look at
this place!
(crosses up the
steps, Dyer following)
I'm rich, you know. I could
buy the whole damn place if I
wanted to.

DYER
Yeah, you like being rich?

ROSE
I sure do. I do. Somebody's
spreading the rumor that being
rich is a drag. But I'll tell
ya, whoever's spreading that
rumor is deadass broke.

DYER
Damn straight.

ROSE

Were you ever rich?

DYER

Not like that. Once I went down the Little Big Horn River in Montana. I didn't see another soul for six days. I felt like I owned the whole thing.

ROSE

Were you really alone for six days?

DYER

Yeah.

ROSE

Jesus, I haven't been alone in about three hundred years.

DYER

Three hundred years?

ROSE

Yeah, three hundred years.

She starts through the revolving door as Dyer addresses himself to the Doorman and gives him a bill. Rose has circled all the way around in the door and now Dyer folds in next to her. They go into the hotel singing.

INT. PLAZA SUITE - DAY

Room service tables are filled with leftover Chinese food, buckets of champagne. Rose's clothes are strewn all over the imitation Louis XIV furniture. The lights are on and gray static patterns play on an ignored television set.

Rose, wrapped in a sheet, lies facing the foot of the bed. She bites into a fresh strawberry.

ROSE

Do I ball like I sing?

Dyer is lying in bed, his head propped up with a pillow against the headboard.

DYER

You're something else, lady.
Something else.

ROSE

Mister, so are you.

She moves to him and puts the half strawberry into his mouth.

DYER

Mmmmm. Thank you. Very good.

She is kneeling over him, looking down.

ROSE

Do you think I'm sexy?

DYER

You kidding?

ROSE

Come on. The Rose wants to know.

DYER

I think anybody who talks about themselves in the third person is "loony tunes".

ROSE

You don't fool around, do you?

DYER

I don't have the time.

ROSE

You got time for me? You want to go steady?

DYER

Sure, what the hell, I'll just stop into the nearest five and dime and get you a box of them chocolate-covered cherries.

ROSE

God, do you remember them? Wrapped all up in gold paper with little cracked hearts all over 'em? And on Valentine's Day the boys and girls used to exchange them with Valentine cards. Shoot, I wish I'd known you when I was in high school.

She buries her head on his chest. Dyer touches her hair tenderly.

DYER

I wish you had, too. Wish I'd had a girl with hair this color.

ROSE
I don't need charity off trash
like you.

She sits up and moves away from him.

DYER
What's the matter? What's
the matter?

He crawls next to her, puts his arm around her and kisses
her.

ROSE
I hate mushy love-stuff. Wake
me up when the killing starts.

But Dyer won't let go of her.

ROSE
I'll tell you something, I'll
tell you something about me
that's so weird you won't even
believe it.

DYER
Yes I will.

ROSE
No you won't.

DYER
Betcha I will.

ROSE
Allright. Here goes.
(looking away)
Once, when I was in high school,
I got drunk one night and I...
I, uh, I took on the whole football
team.

Rose looks more vulnerable than we've ever seen her look
before. She waits for the worst.

DYER
You always tell Christmas stories
like this, Rose?

ROSE
You're shocked, ain't you?

DYER
No, I ain't shocked.

ROSE
I woke up on the 50-yard line.

DYER

I'd hate to tell you some of
the places I've woke up.

They touch, then:

ROSE

You know, I waited all my life
to go back there like somebody,
like a star. I just want to
hear that...hometown applause,
you know? I want them to push
and scream and scratch and
bite to get a view of the one
and only Rose. And she'll shove
it right in their teeth.

DYER

Shove what?

ROSE

Herself. Me. Old rich and famous
me.

They kiss. The telephone rings. Rose reaches over and
answers it. Long pause. She sits up, panicked.

ROSE

Oh, Jesus, I'm sorry...I'm sorry.
I'll be there as soon as I can...
I was wrong! I was wrong...

She hangs up and scrambles off the bed.

ROSE

Oh, God, I was supposed to be
at a recording session.

Dyer watches her.

INT. LOBBY - RECORDING STUDIO - DUSK

Rose and Dyer hustle up the stairs. Behind them, on the
street below, Mothersfor Peace are packing up their things
for the night.

ROSE

Oh, God, am I gonna get it.

They rush on.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - NIGHT

It is empty. In the silence, Rudge is waiting, sitting
on mixing board.

After a moment, Rose bursts in with Dyer. She shoots a
panicked look around the studio.

ROSE

Where is everybody?

Rudge doesn't answer. As Rose and Dyer head for the booth, Rudge crosses to the center of the console and leans against it. He folds his arms and waits.

The door pushes open and in come Rose and Dyer.

ROSE

Hi, baby! What's shakin'?

RUDGE

Where were you?

ROSE

Rudge, this is my friend Houston Dyer. Houston, this is my manager, Rudge Campbell.

DYER

(offering a
handshake)

Howdy. Nice to meet you, sir.

RUDGE

Terrific. Fucking terrific!
Keep everybody waiting for hours
and what do we get in return? A
fucking cowboy. They said you'd
never show up.

(crosses to Rose)

I said she'll show and guess what?
She does show! Not one hour late,
not two hours late, but five fucking
hours and three thousand dollars
late.

DYER

Hey, mister...

RUDGE

I should have my head examined.

DYER

These are real live people you're
talking to here.

RUDGE

Listen, Sonny, this woman and me
go back to when you were still in
high school whacking off before
sixth period. I'm in business with
her. I talk to her any way I want
because Miss Me-Gimme-Mine over
here, she treats me any way she wants.
So you butt out!

Dyer turns and goes. He sits against a table in the corner, listening.

ROSE

Don't you talk trash to him.
Or to me neither anymore.

RUDGE

Oh, I'm sorry. I'm very sorry.
My mistake. I thought we had
an appointment to make some money.

Rudge goes, slamming the door behind him. Rose watches him as he walks past the window of the booth and disappears. She picks up her bag and crosses to the console where Rudge had stood.

DYER

Whoo! --What a bummer!

Dyers gets up and starts for Rose.

Rose pulls a bottle of Aquavit from her bag and drinks..

ROSE

Shook you up, huh? It's just
his trip.

DYER

(arrives next
to her)

You know, I just don't understand
you people.

ROSE

I was late. He was pissed. So
he put on a show about it. That's
all we do around here.

DYER

Sure got a scuzzy mouth...

ROSE

(whirls on him)

Shut up! He's a fucking magician
and he don't need no help from a
piece of meat in a chauffeur's cap.

Dyer gives her a long look, then heads for the door and leaves. Rose sinks against the console and drops her head. Then she quickly goes.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Dyer marches along the sidewalk, Rose following fast behind him. He climbs into the limo and slams his cap down on the seat. Rose pulls the door open on the passenger side.

DYER

Rose, close the door. I gotta go.

ROSE

No, no, no! Come on, Dyer. I can't let you go.

DYER

He's right about you, you know that?

ROSE

Dyer, I want some Chinese.

DYER

Miss Me-Gimme-Mine!

ROSE

I want Chinese. I want it now.

DYER

(starts the car)

Rose, close that fucking door!

ROSE

No!

DYER

I'm going, Rose.

ROSE

No!

She jumps in and slams the door. Dyer pulls away from the curb as Rose slides over next to him.

DYER

Hey, Rose, this ain't gonna work. It ain't gonna work.

He jams on the brakes.

ROSE

(as the car stops)

You're not going anywhere without me.

DYER

Get out!

ROSE

Never.

DYER

Rose, I said get out.

ROSE

Make me.

But instead, Dyer himself climbs out of the car, leaving it standing right in the middle of the street. Traffic starts to pile up behind it.

DYER

I don't need this shit.
I never fucking did.

He strides over to the sidewalk and calls back to her.

DYER

I didn't come back for some
hootchy-kootchy woman to blow
my mind!

ROSE

(yelling)

I ain't no hootchy-kootchy
woman!

Dyer ducks into the nearest building whose entrance sign reads: "Luxor Baths. Men Only."

Now horns are blaring and there's a big pile-up of cars behind the limo. Rose gets out and starts toward the building, but a cab driver stops her, yelling obscenities. They scream at each other and finally Rose just walks away.

ROSE

Oh, go eat your meter!

Rose disappears into the building.

INT. LUXOR BATHS LOBBY - NIGHT

Rose strides right past the man at the front desk as two towel-clad men watch in amazement.

MAN

Hey, lady! Lady! Crazy
lady!

But Rose has gone.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Rose waltzes right through the room. As she passes two clients:

ROSE
Men! My favorite!

She goes up to a man sitting at a table reading a magazine.

ROSE
Hey, you see a guy come through here?

MAN
That's all we've got here is guys. What guy?

Rose grabs a microphone off the table.

ROSE
Houston Dyer...Houston Dyer.
Please report to the Rose...

MAN
(tries to grab
the mike from her)
What's the matter with you,
lady?

ROSE
...You're wanted up front,
Houston Dyer...

MAN
Hey, miss...

She slams the mike down and storms out into the pool area, where a customer drops his towel.

ROSE
(calling as
she goes)
Dyer! Dyer! Houston Dyer!

Leaping every which way are pot-bellied, red-faced men. They cover up with towels -- and some dive right into the pool! She's creating mayhem and enjoying every moment of it.

ROSE
(to herself)
Boy, I sure picked myself a
peck of pickled peckers this
time!

Rose rounds the corner and walks past three men who are taking showers. They quickly turn their backs to her and try to hide themselves.

ROSE
Don't hide it 'til I've tried
it!...Keep watering it, honey.
I know it'll grow!

She rounds the second corner and starts down the length of the pool. A man falls into step with her, gives her a flash.

MAN
Wanna borrow my towel?

Rose keeps right on going.

ROSE
Dyer! Houston Dyer!...Come
on out of there, you!

Now she arrives at the window of the steam room, clears a looking-place with her hand and sees Dyer inside. She starts toward...

INT. STEAM ROOM - NIGHT

...the door and comes swinging in.

ROSE
Okay, everybody out! Everybody
out! Come on! This is a fire
drill! Come on! Everybody out!

The room empties. Rose and Dyer are alone. She stands in front of him.

ROSE
If I don't get a kind word in
the next four seconds, I'm
gonna do something fierce.

She reaches down and picks up the hem of her dress, threatening to pull it over her head.

ROSE
And one...And two...And three...

DYER
At ease! At ease, sailor.
Take a break.

Rose sits down on the bench near him and settles back into the corner.

ROSE
Oh, Dyer, I'm awful sorry.
I got a big mouth.

Dyer leans back, looking away from her.

ROSE
(taking in
the room)
Gee, it's kinda nice in here.
Are all steam rooms like this?

Dyer chuckles. A pause, then:

ROSE
Why do you want to walk out
on me?

DYER
It ain't you so much as it is
your life. It's like a grenade
range.
(then)
And it's me, too. Lordy.

ROSE
What do you mean it's you too?

Dyer is silent.

ROSE
Oh, a mystery! Come on, Houston,
I told you about the football
team.

Dyer struggles with his thoughts, then finally turns to her.

DYER
You see, I'm really a Sergeant
in the fucking Army. Right now
I'm AWOL. I was supposed to be
back at Fort Campbell, Kentucky,
three weeks ago.

ROSE
You mean you ain't no chauffeur?

DYER
No ma'am. No chauffeur. Not
The Lone Ranger.

ROSE
I been had!

DYER
Sometimes I get scared that maybe
the Army's all I know. I mean,
I've been in since I was eighteen.

ROSE

Eighteen?

DYER

Yeah. Me and Vincent Birkham, we joined on my birthday. Hot food, a roof over my head, socks all lined up in a row. It was a beautiful thing. Then it kind of went sour.

ROSE

You're thinking about walking away from the Army for good, aintcha?

DYER

Yeah.

ROSE

Houston, you don't have to go back. You don't. You can stay with me. I'll take real good care of you.

Dyer smiles. Rose, her clothes glued to her body like pink paste, stares at him.

Just then the door bursts open, a burly New York City PATROLMAN from the 11th Precinct, followed by the Towel Man, slams inside -- and behind him, towel-clad customers, all jamming the door.

PATROLMAN

Okay, lady...Let's go! The party's over.

EXT. 11TH PRECINCT - NIGHT

Rose, under a blanket, is led down the steps by Dyer, Rudge and Dennis. Three policemen are also escorting her.

RUDGE

Come on! Okay, Rose, the limo's over there! Let's get out now. We've had enough of this lark.

They start across the street and one of the policemen holds an autograph book in front of her. Like she was born to it, Rose snatches the book and signs it.

ROSE
(abruptly)
Rudge, after the Florida show
we're cancelling all our
bookings!

RUDGE
(as they arrive
at limo)
Here we go again. What's
wrong now?

ROSE
Everything. It's my life, man--
(looking at Dyer)
--my life is like a grenade
range.

RUDGE
Well, that's specific anyway.

DYER
(smiles)
Rose, I'm going to wait in the
car.

Dyer goes. A policeman moves in on Rose immediately.

POLICEMAN
Hey, Rose, can I have your autograph?
It's for my daughter Lucy.

Rose signs as Rudge goes right on talking.

RUDGE
Why don't you tell the truth?
You found some hustler...you've
known him for a fast ten minutes
and because he hasn't picked your
pocket -- yet, or told you you
looked like Petunia Pig, you think
he's the White Knight!

ROSE
No! Listen, Rudge, there's very
few real men left in the world.
I got myself one now and I'm gonna
hang on. Now listen to me. After
that Florida show, he and I are
going away together and that's that.

RUDGE
Lay off for a year, baby...they'll
bury you in the remainder racks.

ROSE
I'll take my chances.
(to Dennis)
Give me my goddam bag.

She grabs her bag and starts to go.

RUDGE
Wait a minute!
(referring to
Dyer)
What does he feel about
this?

ROSE
He doesn't know about it yet.

Rose walks away, heading for Dyer.

RUDGE
Let's get out of here, Dennis.

They get into their car as Rose jumps into Dyer's car. They take off and disappear down the block into the night.

EXT. BROOKLYN HEIGHTS PROMENADE - NIGHT

Rose and Dyer are walking along the promenade, the Brooklyn Bridge and the Manhattan skyline lit up behind them.

DYER
You can't just leave. You gotta be crazy! You've got your whole career --

ROSE
Look, you stay with me until after I do that show back home and I'll go anywhere with you. I'll go to the woods, I'll go to the mountain tops, anything ...anywhere. Out of state... out of sight...

DYER
How about out of the country?

ROSE
Out of the world!

DYER
Oh, Rose! Rose! You know, you gotta be whacko!

ROSE

Yeah, I know. What're you gonna do about it?

DYER

You're a love.

Dyer stands there looking at her. He smiles, then folds her in his arms. They kiss.

EXT. RUNWAY - DAWN

Rose's plane takes off.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Leopard skin walls, brass lamps from India draped with exotic scarves. Indian print bedspreads cover the conventional seats, making this the perfect home-away-from-home for Rose and her entourage.

Rudge and Dennis are talking at the rear of the plane. Nearby in the last seats are Dyer and Rose. Rose is sleeping, the sun hitting her hair through the window next to her.

Rudge finishes with Dennis and starts forward in the cabin. But he stops, looks at Rose, then beckons Dyer to follow him. They move past various band members and two girls who are working a Ouija board.

Rudge picks up a bottle of Jack Daniels and two mugs of coffee, then sits down at a table.

DYER

Different strokes for different folks.

Dyer sits down opposite him.

RUDGE

What?

DYER

The "Ouija Girls".

RUDGE

Oh, right!

Rudge pours a healthy shot of bourbon in each of their mugs.

RUDGE

Sippin' whiskey, eh?

DYER
(toasting)
Lynchberg, Tennessee.

RUDGE
Population: five-one-seven.

DYER
Waco, Texas. Population:
94,632. Everybody wants to
be a shitkicker.

They laugh and sip.

RUDGE
I'm really glad she's found a
friend at last. I've seen them
come and go and I've always
hoped that one might stick.
Take the weight off her, you see.
Give her an anchor.

Dyer says nothing.

RUDGE
You don't think she's drinking
too much, do you?

From the back of the plane comes the sound of a guitar.

RUDGE
You ever been on the road with
a rock 'n roll band?

DYER
First time.

RUDGE
You're going to love it.

Now Rose is singing, half-asleep, a pint of Aquavit cradled
in her hands.

ROSE
Let me call you sweetheart
I'm in love with you.
Let me hear you whisper
That you love me, too.
Keep the lovelight burning
In your eyes so blue...

Suddenly she finds herself looking out of the window and
abruptly stops singing.

ROSE

(crying)

Where am I? I never where
the fuck I am! All these
fucking clouds look alike!

Dennis leans over and touches her hair, comforting her.

DENNIS

Easy, honey...Rosie...
Rosie, it's all right...

Rudge is leaning back in his seat now, looking at Dyer.

RUDGE

Welcome to Rock and Roll.

EXT. ST. LOUIS - DAY

Rose's plane prepares to land in the Mississippi River City,
as we hear the big sound of a concert.

INT. STAGE - ST. LOUIS - NIGHT

Rose and the band are in performance. KEEP ON ROCKIN'.

The song ends. Long and enthusiastic applause. Rose bows.

ROSE

Thank you, St. Louis!

INT. BACKSTAGE - ST. LOUIS AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

A cake centered on a buffet table. Rudge and Dennis make
their way through a post-concert crowd of well-wishers, Rudge
greeting people by name and promising to come back. Then
Rudge sees Chief Morrison and his wife.

RUDGE

Hey, Chief, you want to come
down and meet Rose?

He leads them to the end of the table where Rose stands next
to Dyer. Robbie, a member of her band, is with them. He and
Rose are practicing background vocals.

RUDGE

Rose -- Rose!

Rose turns to them.

RUDGE

Rose, Police Chief Morrison
here and his wife. He gave
us a little extra protection
tonight.

ROSE
(shaking hands)
Hi, hi. How ya doin'?

MORRISON
You've got a mighty generous manager.

ROSE
Oh, ho! I've heard ole Rudgie called plenty of things, but that's the first time I heard him called generous.

The Chief laughs nervously.

RUDGE
(to Morrison)
Excuse me.
(calls into crowd)
Don! Dennis, bring Don down here.

A wide-eyed man with a girlfriend in tow swoops over. As he talks to Rose, the girlfriend tries to focus her camera and take a picture of Rose.

RUDGE
Don Frank, Rose. Don Frank's handling midwest distribution.

DON
(shaking her hand)
Get me a hankie! Honey, you were sensational! Psychedelic! The band was terrific! You were so together! Honest to God, you put me away, honey! I wet my pants!

ROSE
Don't you want to go home and change?

DON
My shorts were in flames!

DYER
I think Rose is getting tired.

ROSE
How can you tell?

RUDGE
Don's a very good friend of ours.

DON
Rack jobbers rule!

ROSE

Honey, they don't rule me.
I'm sorry.
(to Dyer)
I wanna go home.

Rudge takes Dyer aside.

RUDGE

What are you doing here?
You don't belong here. Don't
you go telling her 'tired.'
She's got commitments and
responsibilities. And these
people are important.

DYER

(moves back
toward Rose)
The lady needs a rest.

RUDGE

(following him)
When I tell her. When I tell
her. And when she's finished
her business. Because we got
a partnership going here.

ROSE

(to Rudge)
What's happening now? What
song are you singing now, man?

RUDGE

I'm just having a word with
your friend.

ROSE

(to Rudge)
Look, I'm really tired. I'll
see you on the plane tomorrow,
okay?
(to Dyer)
Take me to bed.

They walk off together. Rudge watches them go.

RUDGE

(to Don)
Listen, call me tomorrow, will
you? We're not leaving until
late. I got a little something
extra for you.

DON

It's cool, it's cool. He got
you covered. Dennis got you
covered.

He and his girlfriend leave. Rudge stands there, thinking.

INT. ST. LOUIS AIRPORT - DINING/WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

All dull tan and institution green. Driving rain outside,
mixed with fog which blows past the large windows overlooking
the airstrip. Rose's plane is parked just outside.

Dennis walks through a Passengers Only cage and comes into
the main waiting room where the band and their girlfriends
are sprawled about, waiting. Various soldier and civilian
passengers, as well as a couple of stewardesses, are also
grounded. Dennis answers the band's complaints as he goes.

He comes up to Rose, who is seated at a table with Dyer.
She is in the middle of telling his fortune with tarot cards
and putting on nail polish. Surrounding the cards are jars
and bottles, slices of lemon and glasses of orange juice.

DYER

Hey, Dennis.

DENNIS

I'm sorry, Rose, they still
don't know when it's going
to lift.

Rose, hidden behind dark glasses, looks over her shoulder
toward the airfield.

ROSE

Oh, Christ, Dennis, can't we
even wait on the plane?

DENNIS

I'll check it out.

DYER

(as Dennis goes)
Want your fortune told?

DENNIS

No, thanks.

Rose starts mixing a drink for Dyer, pouring various powders
into his glass of orange juice.

ROSE

Houston, lemme see your tongue.

DYER
I beg your pardon!

ROSE
Come on, don't be a putz!
Lemme see your tongue.

He shows his tongue a little bit.

ROSE
Come on, let me see your
real tongue.

He sticks it way out.

ROSE
That's the tongue I know!
Listen, toots, you look a
little green around the gills.
Drink this. Vitamins...
minerals...Drink this.

She hands it to him.

DYER
Far out!

ROSE
Drink it, honey. Drink it.
You need it. You gotta keep
up your strength, you know.
Oh, drink it. Come on, don't
be a chump. Drink it.

Dyer drinks it.

ROSE
Oh, my brave boy! I'll get
you straightened out when we
go away, okay?

DYER
(finishing up)
I think this'll do it.

ROSE
I think that'll do it for sure.

She drinks down her own concoction.

In the back of the room at the bar are two brand-new airborne privates -- with lots of empty beer bottles around them. They are already quite drunk. As we'll soon learn, their names are Mal and Tiny.

A waitress enters the room, carrying a tray.

WAITRESS

Who ordered a dozen raw eggs?

MAL

A dozen raw eggs! Over here!

TINY

And a dozen raw beers!

The bartender brings two new beers as Tiny takes the eggs from the tray.

ROSE

Oh, Houston, look! Look what the Army did to those poor little boys.

DYER

You better let them little boys be, Rose.

ROSE

Houston, you know me better than that by now, don't you, dear?

(calling over)

Hey, Colonel! Colonel!

TINY

(to Mal)

I think she's talking to you.

MAL

You talkin' to me?

ROSE

Oh, honey, you know I'm talkin' to you. C'mere! Come on over here!

(to Dyer)

Airborne, Houston. Airborne.

The boys start over toward the table.

EXT. TERMINAL - NIGHT

Still foggy. And the plane is dripping from the earlier rain. Rose's group, a straggling parade singing the Airborne song as they come out of the building and climb the stairs into the aircraft. Mal and Tiny are escorting Rose, followed by Dyer, who dutifully carries her bag. Dennis brings up the rear. Local groupies wave goodbye. Behind all this, the remaining customers in the waiting room are watching this weird procession.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

Band members and their girls are lying about -- some smooching, some smoking, some snoozing.

Rudge and Dennis enter from the back of the plane. A pilot and navigator file in front of them en route to the cockpit.

RUDGE

Okay, everyone! We're getting clearance for Memphis soon. The fog is lifting, right?

Rudge stops in front of Rose and Mal.

RUDGE

Who's this then?

ROSE

Rudge, this is Mal.

Mal stands up.

ROSE

This is Mal. He's going to be traveling with me. My personal bodyguard, my personal masseur.

Rudge and Mal shake hands.

RUDGE

(to Rose, but
looking at Dyer)
This troupe gets bigger every day, eh?

EXT. RUNWAY - DAWN

Rose's jet screams into the clearing sky.

INT. MEMPHIS AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

From the wings we see Rose, performing the final number of the concert, "SOLD MY SOUL TO ROCK AND ROLL", spreading her arms out, and the tidal waves of noise shake the auditorium, the applause so deafening you could walk on it all the way to Florida.

Dyer watches from the wings stage right, while Dennis, nearby, tries to control some groupies who are dancing and clapping.

Mal watches from the wings stage left, right next to Chip, who is running the light show from a dimmer board.

The audience is already worked up and throngs of people are already pressing against the apron of the stage. Rose's security guards and some local policemen are bodily holding them back.

The song is over. Rose falls to the stage.

The mob goes crazy with applause.

Rose runs offstage now, into Dyer's arms, which lift her up, swing her around, throw her back onstage to screaming applause, kids lunging up now, guards pulling them off.

From the auditorium we hear the roar still crescendoing, a tornado, the kids still clambering, the guards struggling, the sounds of the place turning into a madhouse now, people screaming. We can see and feel the edges of a near riot.

Dyer sees this and lunges toward Rose. So does Mal.

Rose is surrounded and disappears from sight. Band members start filing off the stage. Dyer picks up Rose and carries her offstage.

INT. BACKSTAGE - ANOTHER ANGLE

Rose and Dyer fight their way through the backstage area, heading toward her dressing room. Guards are pushing back the hoards of screaming kids. They pass Rudge, who is waving a fistful of papers in the face of the auditorium treasurer.

RUDGE

(yelling)

The gross doesn't check
against the manifest! WHO
GAVE AWAY ALL THOSE COMPS?!!

Rose and Dyer continue on.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE ROSE'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Guards holding kids off behind. In Dyer's arms is Rose, her clothes a wreck, but her face wild with joy and excitement. The kids are pushing past the guards, who are straining to hold them back down the corridor.

INT. ROSE'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Dyer carries Rose right into the dressing room and the door is slammed behind them. Rose slides to her feet, her arms still around Dyer. They kiss and Rose tears at Dyer's clothes, undoing his belt.

ROSE

I'm so hot. Fuck me.

They kiss again.

Suddenly Rose goes rigid in his arms. A hush for a moment.

And now we see over in one corner of the room a litter of cigarettes in an ashtray, a watery drink that has been nursed for hours, and beside them, a slim, chic, attractive Eastern girl -- her eyes go white at the sight of Dyer. Her name is SARAH.

An awkward SILENCE. Rose slithers out of Dyer's arms.

Sarah extends her arms to Rose. There is a moment's hesitation, then Rose moves to her and embraces her. Sarah's lips move to Rose's and Rose discreetly turns her cheek as their lips brush and hold for just a beat.

Dyer watches them, fastens his belt as discreetly as possible.

ROSE

Sarah. How you been? How
you been?

They separate and Rose turns to Dyer.

ROSE

Houston, this is Sarah Willingham.

Dyer nods hello.

ROSE

Sarah, this is Houston Dyer.

SARAH

Looks more like Galveston to
me.

Dyer grins at her.

INT. ROSE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The sound of giggling and quiet conversation. The CAMERA PANS ACROSS the bedroom, PAST the disarray of Rose's belongings, and comes to rest on the bathroom, where Sarah is rinsing Rose's hair.

Rose is wrapped in a robe, head bent over the sink. Sarah stands behind her, her watch pulled up on her arm, her hands running through Rose's hair.

ROSE

Sarah! Don't get carried
away! You're getting it
all over my face! You have
a license for this, Madam?

Sarah's motions become slower, more sensual, and now she leans against Rose, folds her arms around her and kisses the back of her neck.

ROSE

Oh, girl. Sarah, you're gonna
get me all fucked up again.

Sarah releases her. Rose takes a towel, starts drying her
hair and sits on the edge of the tub.

SARAH

(crosses to other
side of room)

Rudge told me you were fucked
up.

ROSE

Oh, I love how you say 'fuck'.
Sounds like tea and crumpets
at the Ritz Carlton, or something.

SARAH

(after a moment)

I missed you.

ROSE

I gotta tell you something.
Something wonderful's happened
to me. Wonderful. That guy --
that guy Houston Dyer? A real
man. He's solid, you know?
He's not like any man I ever met
in my whole life. He likes me.
He doesn't care what I am. He
doesn't care who I am. Sarah,
he makes me so happy.

SARAH

I can see.

Sarah sits down next to Rose.

SARAH

Mine was a poetry teacher at
Bennington. He never took his
eyes off me.

For a moment there is only the sound of Sarah's crying. Rose
puts her arms around her, comforting her. Sarah deepens the
embrace, kissing Rose as she buries her head on Rose's shoulder.
Rose tries to resist, but, sending Sarah's desperate need,
finally responds. They kiss.

SARAH

You're beautiful. I love
you.

Suddenly Dyer appears in the bedroom. He stops as he sees their reflection in the bathroom mirror, then continues on into the bathroom. He is carrying a bottle of champagne in a bucket of ice, which he puts down.

There is a terrible awkward silence. Sarah and Rose release each other. After a moment, Sarah leaves.

Dyer grabs Rose by the shoulders.

DYER

Why?...Why?...

ROSE

Listen to me...

DYER

Shut up!

He slaps her across the face and she falls to the floor. She grabs the champagne and hurls it at Dyer. He ducks and it crashes on the door behind him. Rose flings herself on Dyer now, punching, hitting and scratching.

ROSE

You fucking cocksucker!

And now she lets go with a terrific knee to his crotch. Dyer falls to the floor, doubled over with pain. He is really hurt.

ROSE

Oh, my God...

She throws herself on top of him, wrapping her arms around him.

ROSE

...I'm sorry...I'm sorry...
baby, baby...I'm sorry...
I love you...so much...

INT. RUDGE'S HOTEL BEDROOM - NIGHT

The place reeks of disorganization. You can hardly see the bed for the stacks of legal papers, contracts, tally sheets. Sitting in the middle of it all is Rudge.

RUDGE

How did it go?

Sarah is standing there.

SARAH
You want the details?

RUDGE
Did you tell her I sent for
you?

SARAH
If I were decent, I would have.
But I'm not. Like you.

She turns and goes.

Rudges sips a drink, thinking.

INT. RUDGE'S HOTEL SITTING ROOM - DAY

Rudge is sitting on the couch, a pretty teenybopper next to him. Dennis is on the phone. Mal sits nearby. Rose is pacing and now whirls on Rudge.

ROSE
Why can't you find him?

DENNIS
Look, Rudge, it's Bernie.

RUDGE
I can't talk to anybody...

Rose grabs the phone from him and throws it down.

ROSE
Why the hell can't you find him?

RUDGE
Excuse me! Excuse me!
(to the girl)
Madeline, Madeline, my dear, you
mind going and brushing your hair?

ROSE
Yeah. Go brush your hair, Madeline.

The girl goes. Rose screams at Rudge again.

ROSE
Why the hell can't you find him?

RUDGE
(shouts right back)
I didn't lose him.

ROSE
I ain't so sure about that.

She starts out of the room.

ROSE
Come on, Mal.

Mal follows her. Rudge runs after them.

RUDGE
Where are you going?

ROSE
If you can't find him, I
will.

She marches into the corridor and into the elevator.

RUDGE
Listen, we're leaving tonight
for Florida...remember?
Hometown...Hometown. You're
going to show them all, right?

But the elevator doors have closed.

EXT. BEALE STREET - NIGHT

Endless neon signs, massage parlors, topless bars advertising go-go girls. Rose and Mal weave their way down the street. They are both drunk. She goes over and stops in the doorway of a bar. Mal waits patiently beside her. Music from inside.

ROSE
Hey! Is there a dude in here
by the name of Houston Dyer?

A chorus of catcalls from within.

ROSE
Aw, I hope your goddam chickens
die. Lousy farmers! Farmers!
Everywhere farmers!

MAL
(as they
walk on)
Take it easy. Take it easy.

ROSE
Oh, God, I was such a good lay.
How could he just go off and
leave me like that? Will you
tell me? Tell me, Mal. What's
wrong with me?

MAL

Nuthin'.

ROSE

I should have gone to college.

She suddenly lurches out into the street.

ROSE

Wait a minute, follow me.

Mal pulls her back from oncoming traffic.

MAL

Whoa! Whoa! I'll clear
the area for you there,
trooper.

Mal steps into the street, assuming his best Military Police stance. He raises his arms and a car screeches obediently to a halt.

He beckons to Rose, who salutes him, then crosses the street.

EXT. MEMPHIS STREET - NIGHT

Mal and Rose are sitting on the sidewalk next to the limo. Rose is smoking a cigarette.

ROSE

Oh, the hell with him. I don't
give a damn about him anyway.

Mal looks at her.

MAL

You positive?

ROSE

Nope.

MAL

What are we going to do now?

ROSE

Sonny, there's only one thing
left to do.

MAL

What's that?

ROSE

Go home.

EXT. FORT CAMPBELL, KENTUCKY - NIGHT

A bus drives through the gate, stops inside. A handful of Airborne enlisted men, weary from overnight passes, climb down to the ground. Dyer is among them.

DYER
(to the driver)
Thanks, John.

The bus pulls away as Dyer and the others make their way toward the barracks.

INT. ARMY BARRACKS CORRIDOR - NIGHT

A closed door with the sign "Sgt. 1st Class J. Hargraves
Sgt. 1st Class H. Dyer"

Dyer opens the door. Behind the desk inside is a black man with enormous hands. A massive face which has had all the emotion ground out of it. He is drinking.

Dyer enters the room and closes the door.

DYER
Hey, Julius.

JULIUS
You look like you turned into
some jive junkie or something.

DYER
I know.

He moves across the room and tosses his bag in a cabinet, then sits down on a cot.

JULIUS
You got travel orders for
Saigon.

DYER
Yeah.

JULIUS
You got back just in time.
According to my knowledge of
Army rules and regulations,
two more days and you'da been
moved from the AWOL list to
the Deserters Roster. Covering
for you this long is apt to
push even an old pro like me
past his considerable limits.
They've been blowing a whole
lotta smoke up my black ass
around here, good friend.

Julius smiles. A lot has flowed between the two over the years.

DYER

I appreciate it, Julius.

He gets up and crosses to the table, sits opposite Julius. Julius pushes an empty glass toward him and Dyer pours himself a drink.

JULIUS

Would you believe I re-
upped for another four?

DYER

I just can't righteously
live with it no more.
I lost the taste for it.

JULIUS

You never had it anyway.
You got civilian eyes.

Julius looks at him with some deep, intuitive understanding. They toast glasses and drink.

DYER

God love you, Julius.

And they continue drinking.

INT. FLORIDA MOTEL RESTAURANT - DAY

Rudge is wolfing down an enormous breakfast almost compulsively, not even tasting the food. For the first time, he looks worried. Dennis comes over and sits next to him at the counter.

RUDGE

Did you find her?

DENNIS

No. The only thing I do
have is that she and the kid
toreup downtown Memphis last
night looking for Dyer. They
never went back to the hotel.

(to an unseen
waitress)

Black coffee, honey.

RUDGE

She better show tonight or
I'll break her fucking feathers
for her.

EXT. MAIN STREET - LAWRENCE, FLORIDA - DAY

Driving along in the limo, Rose in the passenger seat.
Reflections of palm trees play across the windshield.
They pass a park and the old Don Hotel.

ROSE
God! Look at this! Oh,
Lord!

MAL
Feels funny, huh?

ROSE
Sure feels funny.

MAL
(referring to
the town)
Look littler?

ROSE
You said it. Littler.
Poorer. Dirtier. And meaner.

They drive past a high school.

ROSE
Lord, Lord, Lord. This
is where I went to high
school.

MAL
Yeah?

ROSE
Uh-huh...football field...
Got me some memories of the
football field.

They drive on.

Driving along another street now, Rose pointing out various
houses and places to Mal.

ROSE
That's Gwen Allen's...and
right in back of that was
Diane's. We used to sing
together, you know? I always
sang the melody 'cause I
couldn't sing harmony for
nothin'.

Mal laughs.

ROSE
God, I loved those two girls.
(then)
There's the vacant lot where
I got my first kiss. Eddie
Pompador was his name.

MAL
Eddie Pompador??

ROSE
Eddie Fucking Pompador, dear.
I was twelve years old. His
name wasn't really Eddie
Pompador, but I called him
Eddie Pompador because he had
this Elvis Presley complex,
sort of went to his hair, you
dig? A real swoop in the front.
I thought he was it, man.

Now the limo turns onto another street, driving slowly.

ROSE
See that? That's my house
over there.

MAL
Yeah?

ROSE
Yeah. See those two people
out there in the yard?

MAL
Yeah.

ROSE
That's my mother and father.

MAL
Ain't that something?

Mal slows down. Rose ducks down out of view.

ROSE
Come on, man. Come on. Let's
go.

The car speeds away and now we see Rose's house and her parents.
Her mother is hanging up the wash on a clothesline in the front
yard. Her father is washing the car which is parked in the
driveway.

Now on another street they drive past a store.

ROSE
There's Leonard's Grocery.
You feel like a Dr. Pepper,
buddy?

MAL
Sure.

The limo circles back and parks. Mal follows Rose into the store. Rose moves to the counter, offering her profile to Leonard. But Leonard is busy ringing up items on the cash register and pays no attention to her. Two girls stand nearby, looking through a box of record albums.

Finally Leonard looks up at her.

LEONARD
Is there something I can do
for you, ma'am?

ROSE
(taking off
her glasses)
Don't you know who I am?

Leonard looks at her, puzzled.

LEONARD
Nope, I can't say that I do.

ROSE
(like a child)
Gimme a moonpie and a Dr.
Pepper, Mr. Leonard.

LEONARD
Oh, uh, it's Mary Jo...
(correcting himself)
Rose Foster. How you been,
Mary Rose?
(shaking her
hand)
What brings you back to these
parts?

Rose looks at him and all the air goes out of her. She turns to Mal, who puts a comforting hand on her shoulder.

ROSE
Jeez...

She walks over to the box of records and flips through them until she finds one of her own albums. She brings it back to Leonard and throws it down on the counter, then pulls a pencil out of his pocket.

ROSE

(as she autographs
the album)

Maybe next time you'll know
who I am.

(puts her glasses
back on and
straightens up)

I am The Rose. The Rose.

Rose and Mal EXIT.

The girls grab the album, all excited now.

GIRL #1

Oh, my God! This is her.
Look at her. It looks
exactly like her, doesn't
it?

GIRL #2

God, I don't believe it.

EXT. STADIUM - FLORIDA - DAY

There are probably bigger things in this world, but it doesn't look like it: a huge "Welcome Home, Rose" sign dominates the field. Bulldozers and cranes are positioning lights, as the lighting director gives instructions.

CHIP

49's good. 51 please.
51 please.

Sound equipment is being readied, gels being cut, sound panels looked over.

VOICE

Check. One. Two. Soap.
Soap. Sin. Test.

Over by the tape truck, we hear:

MAN

You can run the tape machines
in the center bay there.

Out on the stage Chuck gives instructions to the crew through a microphone.

CHUCK

It doesn't seem to be there.
If you can check the cross-
over, and then bring it up
around three hundred. Book.
Bottom. Book, Test. Toast.
Okay, that seems to be getting
real close. If you could give
me some more volume now, I'd
appreciate it.

The drums are tested and the lighting director, Chip, continues giving instructions.

CHIP

You show 53 up. Thank you.
Timmy, try that plug again.

INT. OWNER'S SUITE - STADIUM - DAY

A glassed-in room high over the field and stage below. Girls are busy at work in a series of booths behind Dennis, who's on the telephone. He hangs up and comes around into the main suite where Rudge sits, leaning against a table, sipping a drink.

DENNIS

Rudge, I checked out every
hospital and Sheriff's office
from here to Memphis.

RUDGE

She'll be here.

DENNIS

Yeah, well, I'm worried about
her, man.

RUDGE

Well, don't be worried about her.
She'll be here. She needs this
concert. She'd crawl on her
hands and knees to get here.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

A huge expanse of concrete, empty except for wooden barricades which will later section off the traffic. Rose's limo appears and hurtles forward, then swerves to one side toward a guard who flags her down.

GUARD

Hold it! Hold it! You
can't go in, lady!

Rose stares at him from her position behind the wheel. Mal sits next to her. Suddenly she screams, steps on the gas and pulls the car forward, knocking down a barricade and barely missing the guard.

She turns a sharp right and guns the car past the ticket booths, leaving three more broken barricades in her wake.

EXT. STADIUM - DAY

Now the limo speeds through the stadium gate, kicking up dust as it goes, the sound of the horn echoing in the vast space of the stadium.

INT. OWNER'S SUITE - DAY

Dennis and Rudge's attention has flashed to the field at the sound of the horn. They move to the window. There she is way below, skidding to a stop.

DENNIS

Well, I'll be damned.

RUDGE

What'd I tell you?

EXT. STADIUM - DAY

Rose and Mal get out of the car. Mal heads toward a friend who is working onstage and Rose disappears under the stands, headed upstairs.

INT. OWNER'S SUITE - DAY

Rudge is like a statue. He stands, looking out over the stadium. The door opens. Rose walks in. She is barefoot and exhausted.

ROSE

Made it.

RUDGE

Yeah! Yeah, I see.

ROSE

(putting her things
down on the table)

Yeah, and I've been doing some thinking.

RUDGE

Yeah?

ROSE

Yeah. And it's definite, Rudge.
I'm gonna take a year off.

She turns away and crosses to the bar in the corner, pours herself a drink.

RUDGE

Uh-huh.

ROSE

And -- uh --

RUDGE

Yes, go ahead.

ROSE

I, uh -- I don't want to hurt
the band none, you know.

(sits on a
barstool)

So I think it's a good idea
if we keep them on salary
after tonight...just until
I can decide when to come back
and all...stuff like that.

As he listens, Rudge moves slowly toward her and now stands
just behind her. Rose is averting her eyes, looking out over
the stadium.

RUDGE

You finished?

ROSE

Yeah, I'm finished.

Rudge goes to his briefcase on the bar and takes out a fat
legal document, then crosses back to her.

RUDGE

Do you know what this is?

ROSE

No.

RUDGE

You ought to. You signed
it.

ROSE

Well, it must be my contract.

RUDGE

Right! Good! I've been reading
it...

Rudge moves away from her, tosses the contract on the table.

RUDGE

I've been reading it...and
thinking about it. And for
the last couple of nights
I've been thinking about us.
(more)

RUDGE (Cont.)

(picks up his jacket
and starts back toward
Rose)

All those filthy holes we've
played. All those nickel and
dime hustlers I had to bargain
with every time you opened
your mouth.

(arrives at
her side)

And not all for you. For me,
too, see? Because I loved it!
I loved it! I loved getting
hold of a selfish, hopeless
junkie and turning her into
a performer that they're willing
to mortgage Australia for. Do
you want to play Brisbane?
London? Do you want to play
Paris? Do you want to play Tokyo?

(after a moment)

Last night, I woke up. And I
thought: Fuck all this. Did
we go down the road together
or didn't we? And I came to
a decision: Either you fulfill
all the commitments that you
asked me to make for you or you
fulfill none of them. Do you
get it?

ROSE

(shakes her
head)

No.

RUDGE

You're not singing tonight.

ROSE

(turns to him)

You're crazy.

RUDGE

The concert's off.

ROSE

What do you mean?

RUDGE

It's my show -- I'm the promoter
and if I want to blow it, I'll
damn well blow it. Everyone'll
get their money back. I'll pay
'em myself. By the way --

(more)

RUDGE (Cont.)

(picks up contract
and throws it on
the bar)

-- get yourself another manager.
I don't want you in my life
anymore. You can start your
vacation right now. You're fired.

Rudge takes his jacket and goes, slamming the door behind him. Rose is stunned. For a moment she doesn't move, then gets up and crosses to the bar. She takes the quart of Aquavit and takes a hefty swig.

Rudge is walking below through the empty stands.

She races toward the door, flings it open and runs out onto the balcony, looks down.

ROSE

(screaming)

R-U-D-G-E!!!

She throws the bottle with all her might and it crashes below, barely missing him. Rudge keeps walking. Rose runs to the staircase, chasing after him.

EXT. STADIUM - DAY

Rudge still walking along, his jacket casually flung over one shoulder. Rose runs after Rudge, screaming at him. He ignores her.

ROSE

Rudge! Stop! Stop! Where
you going? Turn around,
motherfucker!

Rudge walks on, seemingly oblivious.

ROSE

Turn around! Don't you walk
out on me!

Rudge keeps right on going, climbs up into the tape truck and disappears inside.

ROSE

I'm talking to you! Come
back here! Come back!
Come back! I'm talking to
you! Where you goin'?

She drops helplessly onto the corner of a bench. In tears now, she buries her head on her arm. But now she looks up. Here comes Dyer, walking up the ramp under the stands behind her. She runs into his arms, and he spins her around into an embrace.

ROSE

Houston!

DYER

Rose! I missed you!

ROSE

Houston...Oh, God, I thought
I'd never see you again.

DYER

I missed you. Missed you so
much.

ROSE

Oh, Houston...Houston, where
you been?

DYER

Taking care of some business.

They embrace again, then Rose remembers to tell him something.

ROSE

Houston, Houston...Rudge fired
me!

DYER

Fired you!

ROSE

He fired me! I came all this
way to talk to him and get
everything straightened out and
he fired me!

DYER

He can't fire you! Hell, he
works for you!

ROSE

Houston, you don't understand.
He's the promoter! He pulled
the goddam rug right out from
under me!

(then)

Oh, God, what am I talking to
you for? Who the hell are you,
anyway?

DYER

I'm your own private brown-eyed
motherfucker, remember?

He picks her up and spins her around in an embrace.

ROSE

Oh, you...Oh, you...

(then)

What am I gonna do now?

Where am I gonna go? I

got nowhere to go...

(screams)

Shit! I'm so goddam mad!

She is sobbing now, leaning against the fence.

ROSE

I feel so bad...I feel so bad.

DYER

(comforting her)

Take it easy. We'll just go away from here. We'll go away someplace where we can breathe.

ROSE

Houston, all I know is how to sing, you know? I can't walk out on that for something I don't know nothing about. My life is falling apart and you want to buy me a sleeping bag.

DYER

Sleeping bags are nice...cozy. We'll just go 'til we don't want to go anymore.

ROSE

Where we gonna go?

DYER

How's Mexico grab you?

ROSE

(smiling now)

I'm a sucker for adventure!

I really am!

(they kiss,

then)

Houston, there's something I want to tell you. C'mere. C'mere, I wanna whisper.

She pulls his head down toward her and reaches her mouth up to his ear. And she whispers something we do not hear. Dyer listens and smiles. Then he looks into her eyes.

DYER

Rose.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DUSK

The limo drives along, Dyer at the wheel, Rose leaning out the window, breathing in the air.

INT. LIMO - HIGHWAY - DUSK

ROSE

Whoa! Ain't nature wonderful!

(laughs)

Doggone! Haulin' ass down to Mexico!

(rummages in

her bag)

Gotta make myself beautiful!

DYER

You're already beautiful.

ROSE

Oh yeah? You supposed to wear glasses or what?

Houston chuckles. Suddenly Rose looks ahead, seeing something she recognizes.

ROSE

Oh, look at that! Houston, look at that! You see that neon sign up there? You gotta pull up over there...

DYER

What for?

ROSE

That's Monte's, man! That's the first place I ever sang!

DYER

I thought we were going to Mexico.

ROSE

(pleading)

Come on...please...gimme a break! Come on. I just wanna see if they still know who I am. Come on.

EXT. MONTE'S - DUSK

True to Rose's words, a large neon sign marks the spot: Monte's Pink Flamingo Lounge. The limo pulls off the highway into the lot and parks. Rose and Dyer get out.

INT. MONTE'S PINK FLAMINGO LOUNGE - NIGHT

Every redneck in the whole Broward County is lining the bar -- along with loners, drifters and every variety of riffraff. It's all Saturday night country flash, the whole place throbbing with the sound of genuine bluegrass music. A five piece band is finishing a number called EVIL LIES. Applause. The band now starts an instrumental tune called THE NIGHT YOU SAID GOODBYE.

Rose, followed by Dyer, comes in, stops dead in her tracks and yells to the crowd.

ROSE

Hey! The Rose is back and
it's time to get down!

Pasty faces turn at the legendary sound. Some applaud, but more just stare as she and Dyer make their way into the bar. The band noticing too, but they keep right on working. Monte spots her and calls out.

MONTE

Hey, Rosie! Rosie! Rosie!
(points to the
far end of the
bar)
Step into my office!

ROSE

Monte!!

Rose continues along and moves into a vacant spot at the bar, joined by Monte on the other side. They lean across the bar and give each other a big kiss. Dyer sits down next to Rose.

MONTE

I'm glad to see you! You
look wonderful!

ROSE

Thank you.

MONTE

How's it feel to be a great
big star?

ROSE

Oh...

MONTE

Don't go away. I'll be
right back. I'll be right
there.

ROSE

All right. I ain't goin'
nowhere.

A huge, straight up and down short-haired type, glazed with drink, sidles up to Rose.

MILLEDGE

Hi ya, Rose.

ROSE

Hey, Milledge! Honey,
you still here?

MILLEDGE

(to Dyer)

Hey, your mother know you're
out with a hippy freak?

ROSE

Oh, Christ, some things never
change.

DYER

(shaking his
head)

Here we go.

ROSE

(to Dyer)

Now, now, now.

MILLEDGE

Heard you were in town, Rose.

ROSE

Yeah, I'm in town.

(pounds on
the bar)

Monte! Are we gonna do some
juicin' or just bullshit all
night? Come on.

MONTE

(crosses to
her)

Sure, sure.

ROSE

Come on. Bourbon. Double.

MONTE

Okay, a shot glass for you,
right? And a little bourbon.

(pours her
drink)

Whatcha doing way up here,
anyway?

ROSE
Came to see you, fool.

MONTE
Oh, you did, huh?

They lean across the bar towards each other and kiss again.

MONTE
You're wonderful. You're
a great human being. And
your boyfriend? What's he
want?

(to Dyer)
Whaddaya say, son?

ROSE
(turns to
Dyer)
He don't look so happy.
(to Monte)
Give him a Thunderbird and
a ginger. And chase it with
Ripple.

(laughter; then
to Dyer)
What do you really want?

DYER
Gimme a beer.

MONTE
Beer, beer, beer. Comin' up.
Here we go.
(serves Dyer)
All right, beer. Here we go.
Here's a glass for you. Here's
a bottle. And there's the beer.

The instrumental ends and all applaud. Rose drains her shotglass.

ROSE
Do that for me again. I want
another one.

MONTE
A big one, right?

ROSE
Yeah.

MONTE

(serving a
new glass)

Oh, the usual, a great big
one for the Rose.

(pouring more
bourbon)

Sing one song, and all the
drinks are on the house!

ROSE

Is that right? You got it!

Cheers all around.

MONTE

I got it! Okay! Ladies
and gentlemen, the Rose is
gonna sing a song for us.
Give her a big hand.

More cheers and applause.

ROSE

(calls to the
bandstand)

12 bars. 12 bar Blues in E. .
A shuffle!

She slips off her stool.

DYER

(not liking
this)

Where are you going?

ROSE

I'm gonna do what I do.

And she is gone -- on her way to the band stand.

A man slides onto the empty stool next to Dyer as the band
starts playing the introduction.

DEALER

You with her, man?

DYER

Yeah.

DEALER

With the Rose?

DYER

Yeah.

Up on the bandstand, Rose stops in front of the bass player.

ROSE
Got any reds, man?

He obliges and she downs them with bourbon, sets her drink down and grabs the microphone.

BACK AT THE BAR

DEALER
Wanna score? I'm holding the
greatest dope in the world.
I got whites, reds, windowpane,
super smack. Anything you want.

DYER
Hey, man. Take a fucking hike.

DEALER
It was gonna be for free, man.

The dealer moves away as Milledge bangs on the bar.

MILLEDGE
Hey, Monte! Gimme another beer!

TIGHT SHOT - ROSE

The song starts. Her face is The Roadmap of Joy! She pitches her head back and lets the VOICE leap out. A full-blown axe-murderer. The rednecks and the beehives are on their feet and cheering.

ROSE
(singing)
You know women don't like this woman
Because I always speak my mind
But the men are crazy 'bout me
Cause I love to take my time.

If you're gonna love this woman
You gotta love me with a thrill
Cause baby if you don't
I gotta find a man who wil.

Love me with a feelin'
You got to love me with a feelin'
You got to love me with a feelin'
Or you don't love me at all.

I'm the kind of woman
I don't want no half-way stuff
If you're gonna turn me loose, baby
Be sure I had enough.

ROSE (Cont.)

The cops once took me in
But I did not need the bail
I just shook it for the judge
And he put that cop in jail.

You got to love me with a feelin', etc.

At the bar, Milledge shakes his beer bottle and foam squirts out over the top.

MILLEDGE

(calling out)

Hey, Rose, remember this?

Dyer shoots him a look of disgust as Rose continues singing.

MILLEDGE

Hey, come on, you guys! Get
up! This pig can sing!

(calls to Rose)

Hey, you remember the Lake
Worth game? You remember the
Lake Worth game?

(to Dyer)

Hey, she was good. She was good!

(to Rose)

Hey, you wanna do it again, Rose?
You wanna do it again?

Rose stops singing, but the band keeps on playing. Milledge doesn't let up.

MILLEDGE

The line forms right behind me!
I'll be first!

(to Dyer)

Hey, you want sloppy seconds, man?

Dyer uncorks a shoulder-snapping, bone-crushing right into Milledge's face. The man lets out a low GROAN as bits of teeth and blood shoot out behind him, cold-cocked before he even hits the floor.

ROSE

No! Stop that! Stop that!

MONTE

(to Dyer)

Get her out of here before...
Come on, kid! Hey! Son of
a bitch!

ROSE

It's supposed to be a party!

Dyer grabs Rose's bag from the bar and marches to the bandstand.

MONTE

Get her out of here! Get
her out of here before there's
trouble!

DYER

Come on, Rose. We gotta go.

ROSE

No, man. You spoiled everything.
You spoiled it all.

Dyer yanks her from the stage and pulls her toward the back door.

DYER

Come on, let's get outta here.
These low-rent motherfuckers
ain't never gonna appreciate
you. They don't know.

EXT. MONTE'S - NIGHT

Dyer drags Rose outside. She struggles against him, screaming and hitting.

DYER

Now come on!

ROSE

You ruined it! You ruined
it!

DYER

Come on. Get in the car.

ROSE

You ruined it! You ruined
it!

DYER

Get in there!

ROSE

You ruined it!

DYER

Get in!

He pitches her into the limo, then crosses around the back to the driver's side and gets in.

ROSE
(screaming at
him)
Who the hell do you think
you are?

Suddenly the phone in the limo rings. She grabs it and yells into the mouthpiece.

ROSE
Fuck off!

We don't hear the other end of the conversation, but suddenly Rose stops dead still, listening intently. She cups the mouthpiece and turns to Dyer.

ROSE
It's Rudge...He wants me
back. He says anything...
anything I want. He's
crawling.

Dyer leans over and removes the receiver and hangs it up. He stares at her.

ROSE
Don't look at me like that.
Please. Don't look at me
like that.

Whap! She slaps him across the face with her open hand.

ROSE
Oh, Jesus, I'm sorry...I
did it again.

Houston says nothing.

ROSE
Oh, Jesus, I wish you loved
me. Oh, please...

Tears are streaming down her cheeks now as her eyes plead with him.

Dyer looks at her with deep and unfathomable pain in his eyes. His hand goes to the car door and he gets out.

Rose, stunned but unmoving, sits there. Then she follows him.

She stumbles through the parking lot, then stops.

ROSE
(screaming)
Where you goin'? Where
you goin'?

Dyer is already down the road, thumbing a ride.

ROSE
Where you goin'? Houston?

A truck pulls alongside Dyer, slowing down.

ROSE
(now to
herself)
Houston...Where you goin'?

Dyer opens the door and swings himself up into the cab. He takes one last look back, then slams the door. The truck pulls away into the night.

Rose suddenly screams so hard the vein in her forehead looks like it will pop.

ROSE
PLEASE!!!...Please...

She sinks to the ground and just sits there, then cries out into the silence.

ROSE
Where's everybody goin'?

Suddenly a hand taps her and she looks up.

VOICE
Hey, Rose.

A man helps her to her feet. Rose knows who he is.

ROSE
Damn! Damn Sam! Sam!
How you been?

MAN
Hello, sweet lady. I'm
fine.

It's the drug dealer who approached Dyer earlier in the club.

ROSE
Well, good.

DEALER
How you doing?

ROSE

Sam, I gotta go. I gotta go.

The dealer leads her to the limo.

DEALER

Rose, I'm now gonna take the liberty of giving you a gratis balloon of some of the finest shit this side of Marseilles.

ROSE

Sam, I don't do that shit.

He tucks her into the limo behind the wheel and leans close to her.

ROSE

But I don't...

DEALER

It's the best, Rose...to help you. Just for old times' sake.

ROSE

But I...

DEALER

For old times' sake, Rose. My own works. Know why?

ROSE

Why?

DEALER

(kissing her)

'Cause you're the best there is. Be good to yourself, okay?

ROSE

Yeah, okay.

DEALER

I love ya.

INT. TAPE TRUCK - NIGHT

A bank of monitors with shifting images as the unseen tape cameras ready their shots. Rudge is here, standing beside a TV Promoter who is the nervous type and none too happy at the moment. An engineer and the Promoter's secretary wait in readiness.

PROMOTER
(to the engineer)
Pan to the sign.

The tape camera follows instructions and a close-up of the WELCOME HOME, ROSE sign appears on several of the monitors. Then:

PROMOTER
(to Rudge)
I think you better get her here pretty soon, okay?

RUDGE
Don't worry. Don't worry. She'll be here. She'll be here.

A voice from off screen.

DENNIS
(o.s.)
Rudge?

RUDGE
(turning)
Yeah?

DENNIS
(o.s.)
Rudge, I need you.

Rudge starts out as the Promoter again turns to the engineer.

PROMOTER
All right. Tell the crew to take five.

EXT. TAPE TRUCK - NIGHT

Rudge climbs down and joins Dennis.

DENNIS
Rudge, I don't even have a sound check on her yet. I mean, are you out of your mind? I mean, we have to go out and find her and get her to this concert and forget these other goddam commitments.

RUDGE
Look, I don't pay you to think.

DENNIS

Are you insane? Do you want
to go into that truck right
now and tell these people you
don't even know where she is?

RUDGE

Am I insane? Look, I've spent
four years in the trenches with
a certifiable Section Eight!
Now I want all the marbles, see?
I played my ace-in-the-hole.

DENNIS

Well, maybe you'll end up
winning, Rudge, but I think
your little game stinks.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

The limo with Rose at the wheel races along at about 100 mph
and takes a corner virtually on two wheels.

Rose is squinting her eyes painfully, trying desperately to
hang onto the wheel. She reaches for the mobile phone, hitting
the buttons frantically, she can't get through, the channels
are busy, she hits them again and again, getting only gibberish
and clandestine arrangements between men and their mistresses.

ROSE

Get off the goddam phone!
Get off the phone.

It's no use. She hangs up, sobbing, and drives on.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

The limo swerves into the parking lot and skids to a halt.
Rose jumps out and runs past a long section of bleachers.

Beyond her, the football team is working out on the field.

She rounds a corner and runs into a telephone booth, shutting
the door behind her. She hangs her bag on the door and quickly
begins pulling things out of it: her big roll of money, a pint
of Aquavit, a small coin purse. Yes, she has a dime. She
dials the Operator.

ROSE

Operator...Operator...give me
the stadium...I don't know the
fucking number...What do you
mean, Information? Operator!
(jiggles the
receiver)
Operator!

She hangs up. The dime is collected.

ROSE
Oh, shit! SHIT!!

She turns her coin purse upside down, searching for another dime, but out come pennies and a bunch of pills.

She rummages in her bag again: tarot cards, then the set of works which she puts on the shelf and unwraps. But she resists. Instead, she scoops up some pills and downs them with a long swallow of booze. She finds another dime, dials again.

ROSE
Operator! Please help me.
(starts to cry)
Oh, thank you. Thank you.
I gotta find the stadium...

EXT. PARKING LOT - STADIUM - NIGHT

The lines of traffic to get into the parking lot are ridiculous.
SOUND of the band playing warm-up music.

OVER BY THE TICKET BOOTHS

There is a line, four wide. Most of them have full camping gear which they've been using.

EXT. TAPE TRUCK - NIGHT

Not much going on.

INT. TAPE TRUCK - NIGHT

Rudge is on the telephone, the promoter within earshot.
INTERCUT with Rose in the phone booth.

RUDGE
Baby, where are you?

ROSE
I'm at school...No, my high school...
(then)
How's the house?

RUDGE
Standing Room Only.

ROSE
You have to come pick me up...
No, I can't make it by myself...
I'll be waiting...
(coughs)
I'm at the phone booth in the parking lot...

ROSE (Cont.)

(coughs again)

No, no, I'm all right. No,
I'll make it. I'll make it
...Don't worry about me. I'll
be fine. I'll be just fine...
Okay.

Rudge hangs up, turns to the promoter.

RUDGE

Everything's cool.

He gets up to go.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

Rose is dialing a number. The open works lies on the shelf.

ROSE

Hello, Mom? Yeah, it's me...
oh?...What're you watching?...
Yeah, I like her...yeah, she's
good...you sound real close,
too...no, no, no, you don't
have to come...no, too much
traffic...and crowded, it'll
be crowded, real crowded and
everything...Daddy?...Daddy,
is that you on the phone
upstairs?...I miss you, too...
I miss you both...No, no, no,
I already told Momma I don't
want you to come...it's too
much trouble...Oh, no, I'm
wonderful...I'm fine, I'm fine
...Everything's great, great
...Everything's great...No,
we're taking right off after
the concert. We're gonna go
to New Orleans -- but I'm going
to try and get back for Easter
...you know, I'm so tired of
the road, I'm so tired. I
wanna stop so bad...But you
know, there's only one way to
do that...you just gotta, you
just gotta make up, make up
your mind you're gonna stop...
Oh yes, I promise...Say hi to,
say hi to Karleen and Marge,
okay?...I love you...'Bye...

Rose hangs up.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

High over the football field, banks of lights go out one by one. The team runs off the field and Rose is alone. We expect her to come out of the booth, but she doesn't.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

Beside Rose's feet, a syringe drops to the floor.

The trembling begins anew. Slowly, and with great effort, she reaches into her bag. She brings out a scarf and unfolds it. Inside, wrapped in tissue paper, is a new dress. She cradles it in her arms and lifts it up to her cheek. Tears stream from her eyes.

EXT. STADIUM - NIGHT

A big sign with one word - "ROSE" - all lit up and pulsing. SOUND of the band working away valiantly. The audience stomps its approval -- suddenly the SOUND of a helicopter approaching. Thousands of eyes look skyward as spotlights pick up the helicopter approaching. A scream from the crowd as they realize, almost as one, what's happening. And now again, as one, they begin to stomp and chant. "THE ROSE!! THE ROSE!! THE ROSE!!"

A space has cleared near the stage for the helicopter to land, but as the SOUND of the blades and the light of the 'copter appears over the stadium, the space fills right in, the kids SCREAMING and clambering.

The Florida State Troopers come in, start pushing the kids away. As the 'copter comes close, the space clears.

EXT. THE BANDSTAND - STADIUM - ANGLE ON
THE 'COPTER

It lands. Dennis leaps for the door and opens it. Rudge gets out and together he and Dennis help Rose to the ground. She walks slowly, held between the two men. They press themselves through a gate and start toward the back of the stage.

Rose stumbles, almost sinking to her knees.

DENNIS

Rudge!

RUDGE

This ain't gonna work. The hell with the show; we're going to a hospital.

Rose shakes her head "no." Rudge and Dennis support her, lead her forward. Behind them, high against the night sky, an immense display of fireworks goes off. The crowd is roaring. More fireworks, this time in the shape of a huge rose.

ROSE

Did you do that for me?

RUDGE

Yes.

Now they climb the stairs to the back of the stage. Rose pulls herself free, swaying now as the music reaches her. As she gets closer and closer to the sound, she gets stronger; you can see it in her eyes, if not in her gait, in her determination.

The band is playing a lovely song which we'll call "Steve's Tune." Rose makes her way downstage where she sinks to her knees. Suddenly it's bedlam out there. Nothing could penetrate the solid wall of roaring SCREAMS AND APPLAUSE that the audience is throwing out. Hundreds of flashbulbs are popping all over the place.

Rose gets up and crosses to center stage and stands behind the microphone, lifts her arms, drinking in the acceptance. The response is beyond hysteria.

Mal and Dennis stand nearby, watching, stunned. Rudge watches too, helplessly. It's out of his hands now.

Now she signals the band to stop. But the APPLAUSE AND CHEERS go on and on, beyond belief. Rose slumps against the microphone as she fights back her tears -- her face tensing in an excruciating effort to carry on. Then finally:

ROSE

It's so good to be home.
It feels real good to be
home. And, uh...you're
my family.

The people roar their approval.

ROSE

Thank you very much. I,
uh, I didn't mean to be
late. Will you forgive me?

The audience shrieks its assent.

ROSE

I forgive you, too.

More applause.

ROSE

(turns to
the band)

What are you waiting for,
boys? "Stay With Me," --
Mama's home.

The band begins the intro. Rudge hasn't moved from his spot.
Then Rose sings as she has never sung before. Her voice is
fully The Second Coming. No one ever heard it so powerful
or violent or exciting.

ROSE

Where did you go
When things went wrong baby
Who did you run to
And find a shoulder to lay your head upon
Wasn't I there
Didn't I take good care of you
No, no, I can't believe you're leaving me.

Stay with me, baby
Stay with me, baby
Stay with me, baby
I can't go on.

Who did you touch
When you needed tenderness
I gave you so much
And in return I found happiness
What did I do
Maybe I was too good, too good to you
No, no, I can't believe you're leaving me.

Stay with me, baby
Oh, stay with me, baby
Please stay with me, baby.

Remember you said you're always gonna need me
Remember you said you'd never ever leave me
Remember, remember I'm asking you, begging you, oh

Stay with me, baby
Stay with me, baby
Stay with me, baby
I can't go on.

ROSE

(ad lib rap)

You know, I'm the kinda woman,
I can get plenty of men. But,
honey, keeping 'em is the hard
part, ain't it? Yeah, sometimes
I try, I try so hard I drive the
ones I love the most away. I
really try. Maybe this time I'll
be the one to go away. Honey,
ain't it my turn to have some say?

ROSE (Cont.)

(ad lib rap)

Grab hold of me. I say no,
don't go. You can't go, oh,
baby...

(singing again)

Stay with me, baby
Oh stay, stay with me baby
Please stay with me baby
I can't, I can't go on.

Stay with me, baby
Oh stay, stay with me baby
Please stay with me baby
I can't, I can't go on.

The song ends. For a split-second, the audience is too galvanized to move. Then all hell breaks loose! Every soul is on their feet scrambling, applauding, whistling!

Rose painfully wipes the sweat off her forehead. She holds her hand up and after a couple of seconds the applause starts to abate. She is going white. But that trembling hand stays up. She almost loses her balance. The crowd goes silent.

Mark, the bass player, steps forward and steadies her, then steps back.

Rose is hanging onto the mike stand; her hands are white. Rudge is rooted to the spot, agonized. Mal and Dennis are frozen. Rose is beginning to shake perceptibly, staring out, uncomprehending. Behind her, the band is numbed.

Rose looks vacantly out at the stunned audience, sagging on the mike, and speaks quietly with the voice of a little girl. The same voice, the same words we heard at the beginning of the film.

ROSE

You know, I...I got a little
song I want to sing to you
that I learned when I was just so
high. It went...it went...it went...

She sings softly, almost a whisper, no accompaniment.

ROSE

Let me call you sweetheart
I'm in love with you
Let me hear you whisper...

She is in terrible trouble. Her voice breaks off completely--a moment of absolute silence from the huge crowd. The sound system crackles in the silence. Rudge waits, watches.

ROSE

Where's everybody going?

Her eyes glaze and roll upwards. She falls to the stage.

VOICES

Get a doctor...Come on...
Hurry up, for fuck sake.

Rudge moves toward the fallen Rose. .

INT. GARAGE - ROSE'S HOUSE - COLLAGE - DAY

The picture of Rose as a child. The same one we saw at the beginning of the film. Then other photographs of the performers of the 50's and 60's who lived with the same fire and intensity as Rose: James Dean, smiling enigmatically in "East of Eden"; Marilyn Monroe, laughing as her skirt flares in the poster from "The Seven Year Itch"; Jimmy Hendrix, grinning as he plays furiously; Janis Joplin, cackling with pleasure as she performs. And possible people like: Jim Morrison, Lenny Bruce, Elvis, Buddy Holly, Otis Redding, etc.

Over these photographs we hear Rose's voice singing a quiet, simple song:

ROSE'S VOICE

Some say love, it is a river
That drowns the tender reed
Some say love, it is a reason
That leaves your soul to bleed.

Some say love, it is a hunger
An endless, aching need
I say love, it is a flower
And you its only seed.

INT. GARAGE - WIDER ANGLE

The photographers and reporters turn and file out, leaving the garage empty, but for Mal and Rose's mother and father. The parents turn to go. Mal reaches up for the light, switches it off, leaving the screen in near darkness. We hold on the extinguished light.

The song continues as the credits roll.

ROSE'S VOICE

It's the heart afraid of breaking
That never learns to dance
It's the dream afraid of waking
That never takes a chance.

It's the one who won't be taken
Who cannot seem to give
And the soul afraid of dying
That never learns to live.

ROSE'S VOICE (Cont.)

When the night has been too lonely
And the road has been too long
And you think that love is only
For the lucky and the strong,

Just remember in the winter
Far beneath the bitter snows
Lies the seed that with the sun's love
In the spring becomes the rose.

FADE OUT

THE END